

The Heritage Officer Programme

A partnership between
Local Authorities and
The Heritage Council



Heritage Officers work to promote the value of our wildlife, buildings, archaeology and landscapes in local communities and within Local Authorities.



Heritage Officers were first employed by Local Authorities in 1999 in partnership with the Heritage Council and now work in almost all city and county councils in Ireland.

Heritage Officers promote an understanding and appreciation of our natural, built and cultural heritage. Through their collaboration with other Local Authority officials and elected members, they work strategically to safeguard our heritage, strengthen communities and support jobs.

Heritage Officers provide a bridge between the community and the Local Authority, helping the Local Authority to value, protect and record our heritage for the good of the community.

Heritage Officers empower Local Authorities to facilitate community development through social, economic, environmental and cultural projects in their areas. Heritage Officers encourage the celebration of our heritage in cities, towns, villages and countryside through year-round activities and especially during National Heritage Week.

Heritage Officers support the work of conservation architects, archaeologists, ecologists, forestry and agricultural advisors, local historians, cultural and eco-tourism businesses, researchers and innovators.





AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

Heritage Officers develop and implement heritage and biodiversity plans, in partnership with City and County Heritage Fora, for their city or county and contribute to new heritage policy at regional and national level.

Heritage Officers work with other specialists within the Local Authority, ensuring that legislation relating to natural and built heritage is considered at an early stage when projects are being developed. This enables the Local Authority to carry out and support necessary development while ensuring that our heritage is protected.

Heritage Officers contribute to the development of policy in City and County Development Plans and related plans and strategies, such as the new Local Economic and Community Plans (LECPs).

Heritage Officers can leverage funding for Local Authorities and communities through development of projects which attract support from the Heritage Council, Rural Development Programme funds and European funds such as INTERREG, LIFE and PEACE.

Heritage Officers help community groups organise heritage talks, walks, workshops and projects for National Heritage Week, the Tidy Towns competition, festivals and commemorative events. They promote tourism and support traditional crafts & traditional building skills and businesses which develop guided walking tours, festivals, cycling trails and artisan food festivals.

FUTURE CONTEXT

Heritage Officers work to ensure that Local Authorities can take on the many new challenges and responsibilities of the growing body of national and international legislation relating to built, natural and cultural heritage. Early engagement can often prevent difficulties which might otherwise arise through lack of consideration of these issues at an early stage in project and budget planning.

There is a growing appetite amongst people to engage with their local heritage. Heritage Officers are ideally placed to help communities develop and sustain an active involvement with their local areas and support jobs in tourism, agriculture, forestry, cultural and technological innovation.

A vibrant community thrives on its pride of place. It also attracts visitors and brings business and jobs to local areas. Heritage Officers see the potential in their local areas and help communities develop conservation projects, walking festivals, historical re-enactments and lots more to bring people together to celebrate their sense of place. By helping to protect and develop our heritage resources to their full potential, Local Authority Heritage Officers, in partnership with the Heritage Council, promote employment, well being, sustainable tourism and vibrant cultural services for everyone.

Photographs: Catherine Casey (Aghaboe Graveyard & Peacock butterfly), Michael Scully (building a bug hotel), Kevin McFeely (launch of Martello Tower book - Fingall), Labhaise McKenna (3d laser scanning, Raham Church)