



PRESS RELEASE

Council reassures residents about new wildflower meadows

Under the Fingal Growing Places Project, Fingal County Council is changing 20% of green spaces in the county to add more colour and wildlife by letting the grass grow and introducing native flowers on a phased basis. This change represents a completely new approach to open spaces and can only happen gradually so the initial change in how open spaces look in some areas has caused concern among nearby residents.

“We want to reassure residents that although this is a big change to what they are used to, this is a cooperative project and we are more than happy to meet residents on site to fine tune how each area is managed on a site by site basis”, said Senan Turnbull Director of Community Recreation & Amenities with Fingal County Council.

Growing Places only includes 1 in 5 open spaces in the first year and in relation to worries about litter and pests the Director continued, “there is absolutely no reason for rodents or other vermin to increase in areas where grass is getting longer”, he said. “The Council will continue to pick up litter on open spaces”, he continued, “and we will not tolerate any dumping on open spaces by irresponsible people who want to take advantage of this new initiative”. “We have a FreeFone litter hotline and anyone who sees littering happen should report it immediately so that we can fine or prosecute the people involved and clean up whatever is left behind. ”

“Children can continue to play safely on open spaces and we’re more than happy to cut a play area for children within the growing meadows, even where there isn’t a formal pitch”, he said. “We can also adjust the routes of any cut pathways through the open spaces so that they follow the routes people will naturally go along,” he said.

“As the start of the normal grass cutting season was delayed this year”, Senan said, “there has been understandable confusion about which open spaces are in the Growing Spaces project this year and which have just not had their grass cut yet”. “All areas will have had a full or partial cut in the coming days and we're putting up signage on the 100 or so Growing Spaces sites to explain what is happening.” “We've also put detailed information on our website including a full list of sites involved, and will add responses to any frequently asked questions as they come into our Parks Department”, he said.

“It's definitely true to say that this project will help us to manage an every increasing area of open space in Fingal as we keep taking new parks in charge”, Senan said, “but that's not the reason why we are doing this”. “If we had unlimited resources in my Department or in the Council we would still be changing how our open spaces are managed to make them more colourful and interesting and in line with international best practice for public parks and open areas”, he explained.

“This approach is about matching our resources to the usage pattern of our open space as well as adding more colour and making them more interesting without interfering with how people use them”. “The key message now is to ask residents to bear with us and to talk to us”, Senan said. “Once this project matures we are confident it will make our open spaces more enjoyable for everyone.”

For further information following the Growing Places link on www.fingalcoco.ie

Litter Hotline 1800 20 10 93

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