
Galway City Community Forum



Submission to the Draft Parks & Open Spaces Byelaws

June 2013

Galway City Community Forum

Introduction

The Galway City Community Forum (GCCF) acts as the representative structure for the community and voluntary sector in Galway City. GCCF represents over 240 community and voluntary organisations in Galway City. Contact info@galwaycityforum.ie

Draft Parks & Open Spaces Byelaws



Galway City Community Forum is pleased to have the opportunity to make a submission on the draft Parks & Open Spaces Byelaws. The Byelaws were reviewed at a special thematic meeting called by Galway City Community Forum on June 20th 2013. The following are the observations and recommendations arising from that review.

1. GCCF notes that the Byelaws, when read as a standalone document, appear to be very negative. In that way, the current document may have the negative effect of restricting rather than the positive effect of enabling access. GCCF recommends the inclusion of a section on Guidelines for the use of Parks & Open Spaces to precede the section on the Byelaws.
2. Bye-laws should deal with behaviour that threatens personal safety or causes damage to the environment or interferes with the rights of others to use and enjoy parks and open spaces safely and peacefully.

3. These Guidelines should be written in a positive manner encouraging all communities in Galway to make frequent use of the parks and open spaces available to them.
4. The Guidelines should promote the use of parks and open spaces from similar principles to those espoused by the national *Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport for Children and Young People: A Guiding Framework* , which recognises that physical activity plays an important role in the lives of children and young people:
 - as a medium for education
 - as a basis for healthy living
 - as a vehicle for social inclusion

The Guidelines should also be informed by other relevant policies such as the Galway Healthy Cities Project and the Galway Biodiversity Action Plan

5. The Guidelines should clearly state that all users of parks and open spaces are required to do so in a manner that is respectful of the physical and natural environment and of other users. Specifically, the Guidelines should set out the conditions for use of park and open spaces in Galway.
6. Where gatherings are prohibited, the numbers constituting gatherings should be specified.
7. A list of parks and open spaces that come under that defined by the Byelaws must be clearly stated.
8. Violation of the Byelaws must be proactively discouraged and the resources/infrastructure must be in place for this to happen. For example, if there is to be a sanction for litter, litter bins must be made available in all parks and open spaces.
9. Those charged with implementing the Byelaws must be required to provide a reasonable explanation for enforcement.
10. Public information will be required to ensure that all members of the public are aware of the Byelaws and the sanctions imposed.
11. Section 5.2 (c) should be amended to recognise the fact that children naturally climb trees.
12. Galway City Council should consider the installation of exercise and other equipment for those over the age of 12.