

Louth Tourism Strategy & Action Plan 2026–2031



Comhairle Contae Lú
Louth County Council

VISIT LOUTH

Out here, it's legendary!

VISIT LOUTH HERE IT'S LEGENDARY





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1. Introduction

By 2031, Louth will be a leading tourism destination – one that inspires domestic and international visitors while enriching social, economic and environmental wellbeing.

Louth is an exceptional destination and a jewel in Ireland’s Ancient East. Though the smallest county by land area, it combines an expansive coastline with the vibrancy of Ireland’s two largest towns - Drogheda and Dundalk. Strategically located at the heart of the Dublin to Belfast Economic Corridor, Louth enjoys excellent transport links and is ideally positioned for wider exploration across the Boyne Valley and beyond.

Defined by centuries of heritage, the county showcases an extraordinary concentration of historic sites, ranging from the medieval towns of Drogheda and Carlingford to the 6th century Monasterboice High Cross and Round Tower and the 12th century Old Mellifont Abbey. Its fortified landmarks rise from dramatic landscapes, including Carlingford Castle, Ardee Castle, Millmount and Cú Chulainn’s Castle.

Louth’s food reputation is anchored in world class local produce and celebrated through the Sea Louth Scenic Seafood Trail, Boyne Valley Flavours and the

Centre of Food Culture. The county offers a wealth of outdoor and adventure experiences, from land and water activities to elite links and parkland golf courses, as well as an extensive network of trails including the Boyne Valley Camino. Louth’s varied coastal and inland landscapes make it a highly sought after location for film production.

The Louth Tourism Strategy & Action Plan 2026-2031 is the county’s first dedicated tourism roadmap. It builds on the launch of the Visit Louth brand, inspired by the county’s heritage, landscapes, people and its place as the home of Ireland’s greatest legends. Developed through extensive collaboration with Louth’s tourism industry, communities and partners, the plan sets out a clear vision to position Louth as a leading sustainable destination – one that enriches local lives, inspires visitors, strengthens the tourism sector and supports the wider economy.





Louth will be a leading tourism destination

Inspired by its Celtic heritage and the spirit of its namesake, Lugh – the god of light - Louth will be renowned for its striking coastline, dramatic landscapes and rich culture. Defined by authentic, creative communities, it will be celebrated for innovative experiences, unforgettable adventures, vibrant festivals, exceptional food and hospitality - and as the true home of Ireland's greatest legends.

Tourism that inspires visitors and enriches communities.

Our ambition is to unite communities and partners to deliver distinctive, sustainable experiences rooted in Louth's unique identity - enriching local wellbeing, creating lasting visitor memories, and building a resilient tourism sector that supports local livelihoods and the wider economy.



The Strategic Themes & Objectives and Key Development Projects that will achieve this Vision and Ambition are:

Strategic Themes & Objectives

- 1. Strategic Collaboration**
- 2. Tourism Innovation**
- 3. Sustainable Growth**
- 4. Inclusive Tourism**
- 5. Legendary Branding**
- 6. Tourism Enterprise**
- 7. County-wide Discovery**

Development Areas

- 1. Food & Drinks Tourism**
- 2. Events & Festivals**
- 3. Spiritual & Well-being**
- 4. Culture & Heritage**
- 5. Countryside & Coast**
- 6. Activities & Recreation**
- 7. Places to Stay**

Key Development Projects

1. Governance, Oversight & Resourcing

- i.** Tourism forum establishment and operation.
- ii.** Tourism team development.
- iii.** Partnership management with Fáilte Ireland and other external relations.
- iv.** Monitoring, evaluation and reporting.
- v.** Resource and budget management.

2. Product Development

- i.** Visitor attractions.
- ii.** Visitor experiences.
- iii.** Events & festivals.
- iv.** Accommodation growth.
- v.** Food tourism development.
- vi.** Trails, greenways & outdoor tourism.

3. Public Realm & Placemaking

- i.** Vibrant, welcoming environments.
- ii.** Placemaking initiatives.
- iii.** Universal design principles.
- iv.** Environmental sustainability.





2. Where We Are Now

This section highlights the key opportunities and considerations emerging from the research and consultation process. The opportunities capture Louth's distinctive competitive strengths, while the considerations identify the areas that require attention to enhance its appeal as a tourism destination.

Together, these insights form the foundation for the recommendations that shape the plan's vision, strategic direction and actions.



The opportunities and considerations presented here are grounded in research and consultations with Louth's tourism industry, local communities, tourism experts and visitors to the county.

Opportunities

A strong new identity: The Visit Louth brand (launched in 2025), positions the county as a distinctive, compelling tourism destination.

Strategic location: Louth sits at the heart of the M1 Dublin – Belfast economic corridor with excellent road and rail access.

Authentic storytelling: Louth is the home of Ireland's greatest legends—Cú Chulainn, Táin Bó Cúailnge, Boann, the Salmon of Knowledge, Brigid.

Outstanding natural assets: coastal and inland including the River Boyne and Cooley Peninsula – renowned for outdoor activities and adventure.

Vibrant culture: rooted in the creative arts, contemporary and traditional music, and the Oriel tradition of song and poetry.

Welcoming communities: proud of their county and eager to share it with visitors who value their rich culture and distinctive landscapes.

Rich built heritage: medieval towns, estates, castles, ecclesiastical and historic sites of national importance e.g. Carlingford Castle, Proleek Dolmen.

Prime destination for nature, wellness and spiritual experiences - including the Boyne Valley Camino.

Community & Visitors

+200

perspectives gathered.

Tourism and Hospitality Industry

+100

industry contributions.

Travel Trade and Tourism Experts

+ 30

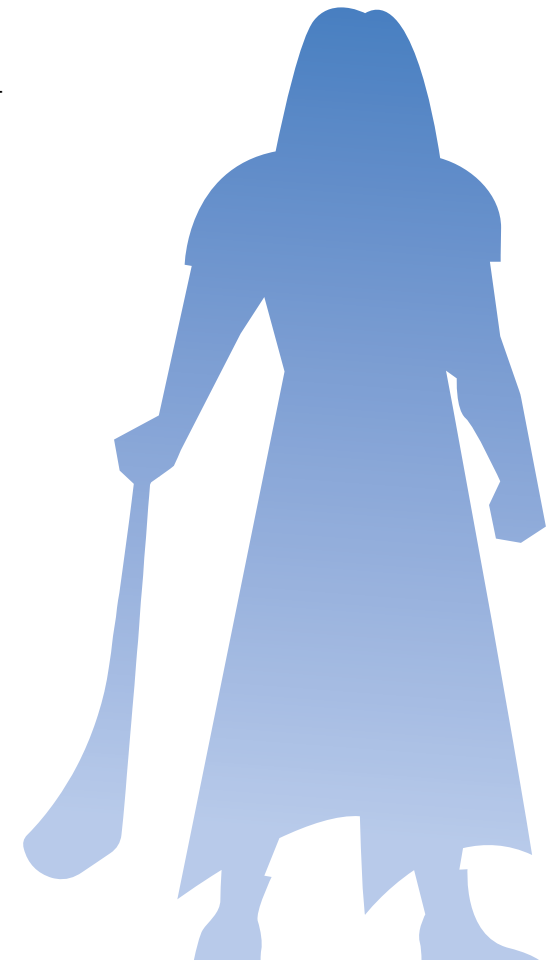
insights from professional travel buyers and sector specialists.

A dynamic events calendar: 80+ annual events, with the Boyne Valley a designated Home of Halloween destination.

Night-time economy leadership: A dedicated Night-time Economy Officer supporting the delivery of night-time programming.

Exceptional food: seafood a signature strength, showcased by the Sea Louth Scenic Seafood Trail, Boyne Valley Flavours and Centre of Food Culture.

Major transformative projects: including Brigid's Way, Táin Trail (County Museum Dundalk and Ardee Castle), Carlingford Lough and Narrow Water Bridge – set to unlock new opportunities.



Considerations

Focus Area	Key Points
Accommodation	Louth has strong potential for sustainable accommodation growth, with significant opportunity to expand provision in the south of the county where fewer than 20% of its 700 hotel rooms are currently located.
Local Data Capture	A dedicated local data system would enable Louth to make more informed decisions by integrating national research with key local indicators such as employment, visitor patterns, booking behaviour and business activity.
Industry Innovation	Rising operational costs and shifts in traditional revenue streams highlight an opportunity to support innovation, digital technologies and diversification, helping tourism providers build stronger, year round demand.
Product Development	Consultation shows strong potential to attract more visitors by empowering local providers and creatives to develop immersive cultural experiences, reimagine and expand the festivals calendar, and grow business tourism through enhanced conference and incentive offerings.
Collaboration	Strengthening collaboration across the tourism sector will help build powerful partnerships, raise awareness of Louth's full offering, and engage communities in sustainable development, while national and international alliances can accelerate future growth.
Travel Trade	International travel buyers see clear potential for Louth, noting that authentic local experiences, high quality accommodation, strong industry engagement and supportive infrastructure – including adequate coach parking – will enhance its global appeal.
Be Strategic	Stakeholders recognise the value of attracting both day and overnight visitors to ensure all parts of the tourism economy thrive, and see opportunities to increase dwell time through compelling itineraries and cross county collaboration.
Public Transport	Louth's strong road and rail connectivity provides a solid foundation for sustainable travel, with improved inland public transport offering further potential to enhance visitor movement and dispersion.
Public Realm	Dundalk's regeneration demonstrates how high quality public spaces elevate both local life and the visitor experience, highlighting the opportunity to strengthen wayfinding, interpretation, visual identity and accessible tourism information across the county.
Tourism Forum	Industry feedback points to the value of establishing an independent Tourism Forum to support Louth County Council's tourism team, bringing together experienced leadership and cross sector representation to drive delivery of this plan.





The combined opportunities and considerations are distilled into 15 recommendations that underpin the vision and form the basis for the Strategic Themes and Objectives, Development Areas, and Key Development Projects set out in this plan.

Recommendations

1. Promote the Visit Louth brand to position the county as a distinctive, must visit destination.

2. Strengthen cross county collaboration and build national and international partnerships.

3. Communicate Louth's full destination story to increase dwell time and encourage wider visitor dispersion.

4. Develop attractions and experiences rooted in Louth's identity, culture, and landscapes.

5. Secure investment in new accommodation, particularly in key hubs and south Louth.

6. Position Louth as a leading destination for outdoor adventures, activities, trails and golf.

7. Build on the success of the Sea Louth Scenic Seafood Trail to establish Louth as a premier food tourism destination.

8. Support and inspire local innovators to deliver new and reimagined events and festivals.

9. Support the Night-time Economy Officer to expand programming and position Louth as a standout destination for night-time experiences.

10. Target high value leisure and business tourism visitors.
11. Develop a robust local data capture system to measure progress and performance.

12. Support education and awareness to strengthen diversification and resilience in the tourism sector.
13. Position Louth as a leader in sustainable and accessible tourism development.
14. Design public spaces that create memorable visitor experiences and enrich local life.
15. Sustain investment in the council's tourism function and establish an expert-led Tourism Forum to drive delivery of this plan.

3. The Way Forward





Louth's vision to become a leading tourism destination is anchored in seven Development Areas:

- 1. Food & Drinks Tourism**
- 2. Events & Festivals**
- 3. Spiritual & Well-being**
- 4. Culture & Heritage**
- 5. Countryside & Coast**
- 6. Activities & Recreation**
- 7. Places to Stay**



Section 3.1 outlines the approach to advancing these Development Areas through seven Strategic Themes and Objectives. While action oriented, these themes also provide a strategic framework that will guide all tourism development activity in Louth over the next five years.

- 1. Strategic Collaboration**
- 2. Tourism Innovation**
- 3. Sustainable Growth**
- 4. Inclusive Tourism**
- 5. Legendary Branding**
- 6. Tourism Enterprise**
- 7. County-wide Discovery**



Section 3.2 focuses on Key Development Projects, with core actions summarised under three priority areas that must be addressed to accelerate Louth's evolution as a tourism destination and deliver benefits that extend beyond the lifetime of this plan.

- 1. Governance, Oversight & Resourcing**
- 2. Product Development**
- 3. Public Realm & Placemaking**



3.1 Strategic Themes and Objectives

Louth's strategy is driven by seven core objectives. Each is aligned with the county's identity, stakeholder priorities, and long-term development goals. The public can expect meaningful progress across the following themes:



1. Strategic Collaboration

Building Powerful Alliances Across Industry, Communities, and Borders

Louth will lead through strategic partnerships that **amplify impact and unlock international opportunities**. From cross-border initiatives to creative industry alliances, collaboration will be the engine of transformation.

Key Actions:

- Strengthen cross-county collaboration by launching an annual programme of industry networking events.
- Partner with local, regional, and national agencies to deliver cross cutting initiatives aligned with strategies such as the Ancient Destination Experience Development Plan.
- Inspire local communities and volunteers to engage with tourism.
- Establish an expert-led Tourism Forum, with representation from industry, community and key stakeholders to drive delivery of this plan.

Indicators of Progress:

- A calendar of industry networking events established by Q4 2026 - evaluated to gather feedback and assess progress.
- Tourism Forum established and active by Q4 2026.
- Ongoing joint delivery of flagship initiatives with Meath County Council, Newry Mourne & Down District Council, and Fáilte Ireland, with key milestones achieved annually from 2026 to 2031.

2. Tourism Innovation

Creating World-Class Attractions, Immersive Experiences, and Signature Festivals

We will champion **bold ideas and cutting-edge experiences** that set Louth apart. From immersive storytelling to globally recognised festivals, innovation will define our visitor offering.

Key Actions:

- Advocate for the development of new immersive attractions, including progressing masterplans for Millmount Quarter and the Reimagined Táin Trail at County Museum Dundalk and Ardee Castle.
- Assess the potential for a cultural centre that reflects the unique heritage of North Louth and an immersive experience celebrating Louth as the home of Irish legends.
- Support local providers to create experiences that showcase Louth's distinctive identity.
- Produce and publish a comprehensive guidance toolkit for festival and event organisers by the end of 2026.
- Expand the events and festivals calendar with Louth led concepts.
- Create bespoke communications to attract film productions and develop film themed visitor experiences.
- Grow business tourism by developing incentive experiences and promoting / developing suitable conference venues.



Indicators of Progress:

- 3 development plans delivered by 2027 – Ardee Castle, Millmount Quarter, Táin Trail.
- Minimum 15 market ready immersive and food experiences developed by 2031 in partnership with Fáilte Ireland and Boyne Valley Flavours.
- Increased year-round visitation linked to festivals and events.

3. Sustainable Growth

Balancing People, Planet, and Prosperity for Long-Term Impact

Tourism in Louth will be a **force for good** — supporting climate goals, protecting heritage, and delivering **economic benefits that endure**. Every project will be designed with sustainability at its core.

Key Actions:

- Align with UN Sustainable Development Goals, National Climate Action Plan 2021, National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030 and VICE sustainable tourism framework that balances the needs of Visitor, Industry, Community and Environment.
- Promote responsible tourism practices (Leave No Trace, universal design).
- Embed climate goals into funded projects.
- Support sustainable infrastructure and cross-county green trail development.
- Advocate for improved public transport connectivity,

addressing gaps in inland access to support visitor dispersion.

- Design and promote sustainable travel itineraries for Louth.

Indicators of Progress:

- Sustainable tourism guidance published by end of 2028.
- Increased countywide visitor exploration, especially by public transport.
- Louth will contribute to national targets by cutting tourism related emissions by 45% by 2030 versus 2018 levels.

4. Inclusive Tourism

Designing Welcoming, Accessible, and Compassionate Visitor Experiences

Louth will be a place **where everyone feels welcome** and where tourism benefits people of all ages and abilities. We will invest in inclusive design, accessible infrastructure, and thoughtful storytelling.

Key Actions:

- Deliver inclusive tourism training and toolkits.
- Improve access to priority attractions and experiences.
- Promote accessible communications and inclusive storytelling.
- Monitor the growth of accessible tourism: projected to account for 30% of the market by 2030, based on Fáilte Ireland forecasts.

Indicators of Progress:

- 10 sites improved for access and signage by 2030.
- County-wide communications available in multiple formats and languages.



5. Legendary Branding

Positioning Louth as Ireland's Most Distinctive Tourism Destination

Our brand is **authentic, and unforgettable** - inspired by our heritage, landscapes, people and our place as the true home of Ireland's greatest legends.

Key Actions:

- Deliver a sustained Visit Louth brand campaign across digital and print.
- Equip local providers with branding tools and storytelling resources.
- Continue to use maps, itineraries and media to position Louth as Ireland's most legendary destination.

Indicators of Progress:

- Annual B2C (business selling to a consumer) and B2B (business selling to a business) campaigns in market from 2026.
- +50% Visit Louth platform engagement growth by 2029.

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6. Tourism Enterprise

Fuelling Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Economic Expansion

We will support tourism entrepreneurs and experience creators with **funding, training, and data insights** — building a dynamic sector that drives growth and innovation.

Key Actions:

- Promote tourism as a viable enterprise path, with targeted supports.
- Support innovation through grants, training, and data insights.
- Develop off-season experiences and business tourism capacity.
- Develop a robust local data capture system to establish baselines and measure progress by 2028.
- Support education and awareness to strengthen data management capabilities across the tourism industry.

Indicators of Progress:

- Launch and administer an annual tourism innovation grant scheme by 2028, supporting at least 5 new enterprises per year.
- Deliver a minimum of 3 targeted training workshops for tourism entrepreneurs by 2028.
- Increase the number of shoulder-season tourism product offerings by 20% across accommodation, events, and experiences by 2031.
- Aligned with national targets – by 2031:
 - › At least 90% of tourism-related SMEs adopting advanced digital tools.
 - › 9% increase in employment in tourism industries versus 2024.



7. County-Wide Discovery

Unlocking the Full Potential of Urban, Rural, and Coastal Tourism

Every corner of Louth has a story to tell. We will promote **tourism dispersion** through placemaking, trail development, and community-led experiences that showcase the county's diversity.

Key Actions:

- Continue to support interpretation, trail development, and placemaking projects across smaller towns and villages.
- Provide funding and capacity-building for community-led events and micro-experiences in less visited areas.
- Collaborate with travel trade and industry partners to enhance promotion of diverse county-wide itineraries.
- Find and promote novel attractions opportunities.
- Explore potential for sustainable accommodation development.

Indicators of Progress:

- Achieved consistent inclusion of each of the 5 electoral areas in Visit Louth marketing campaigns by 2027.
- Target annual growth of 7% in visitor numbers in line with national targets.
- Demonstrate enhanced engagement from travel trade and buyers with county-wide itineraries through annual feedback and partnership reporting.



3.2 Key Development Projects (2026–2031)

The following highlights a selection of key projects from the tourism strategy that will help deliver our strategic objectives and shape the tourism experience in Louth by 2031.



1. Governance, Oversight & Resourcing

Strategic Theme: **Strategic Collaboration** – Building Powerful Alliances Across Industry, Communities, and Borders



Tourism Forum

- Establish a cross-sector Tourism Forum by Q4 2026, chaired by an experienced leader.
- Recruit members from tourism and hospitality businesses, community, travel trade, and key stakeholders.
- Develop Terms of Reference (TOR) and governance protocols to define roles, decision-making processes, and reporting lines by Q3 2026.
- Diary quarterly meetings to progress the actions in this plan.

Develop the Tourism Unit in Louth County Council

- Explore the potential to recruit and onboard additional tourism team members by Q1 2027, including:
 - › Programme Manager to oversee tourism projects, festivals and events.
 - › Project officers to coordinate key tourism initiatives such as the Táin Trail and Shared Ireland.

- Implement an industry and stakeholder engagement plan by 2027:
 - › create a bi-annual newsletter and digital platform to share information.
 - › deliver annual events to build industry and stakeholder collaborations.

Progress and accountability

- Develop a Tourism Strategy Implementation Plan in Q1 2026 with Progress Report beginning 2027 to ensure transparency and accountability.
- Create an integrated data and performance monitoring system to track visitor numbers, economic impact, and stakeholder satisfaction, operational by 2028.

Goals:

- Fully functioning, transparent governance and delivery framework underpinning tourism development in Louth.
- Enhanced collaboration and communication, resulting in

- coordinated tourism growth.
- Increased resources and capacity within the tourism team to support strategy delivery.
- Improved data-driven decision-making for tourism management.

KPIs:

- Tourism Forum established and its first meeting held by Q1 2027.
- TOR and governance framework adopted by the Tourism Forum by Q2 2027.
- Annual industry events calendar in place by Q2 2027, achieving at least 60% industry participation.
- Louth's local data system launched by December 2028.
- Annual progress report published for industry and stakeholders each year.
- Minimum 80% industry and stakeholder satisfaction, measured through annual surveys.

2. Product Development

Primary Strategic Theme:
Tourism Enterprise
– Fuelling Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Economic Expansion



Accommodation

- **Secondary Strategic Theme: County-Wide Discovery – Unlocking Urban, Rural, and Coastal Tourism**

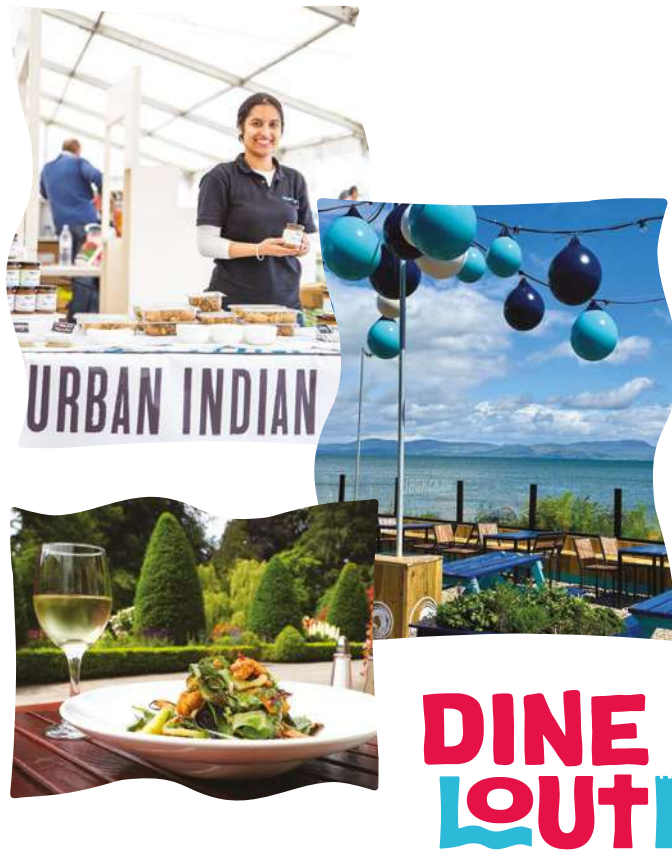
- Conduct a comprehensive accommodation needs assessment by Q3 2026 to identify gaps and opportunities across the county, including rural, urban, and coastal areas.
 - Develop and implement an Accommodation Growth Strategy by Q1 2027, focused on:
 - › Encouraging investment in diverse accommodation types such as hotels, glamping, self-catering, and eco-lodges.
 - › Supporting adaptive reuse of heritage buildings for lodging.
 - › Identifying and assisting with the development of motorhome and campervan facilities at strategic locations.
 - Partner with local businesses, investors, and tourism agencies to promote sustainable development principles and quality standards.
 - Partner with accommodation providers to increase the number of conferences and global meetings held in County Louth.
 - Facilitate planning and infrastructure support for accommodation projects, including addressing parking, transport, and environmental considerations.
 - Launch a marketing campaign in 2027 to promote Louth's accommodation options to targeted domestic and international markets.
- Goals:**
- Increased variety and capacity of accommodation options that meet visitor needs and sustainability standards.
 - Enhanced visitor satisfaction related to lodging experiences.
 - Support for rural and coastal economic development through accommodation expansion.
- KPIs:**
- Completion of accommodation needs assessment by Q3 2026.
 - Publication and adoption of Accommodation Growth Strategy by Q4 2027.
 - Assist with at least 5 new accommodation developments (including alternative accommodation types) operational by 2031.
 - Motorhome facilities established at 3 key locations by 2030.
 - Visitor satisfaction with accommodation rated at least 80% by 2030 in surveys.
 - Increase in overnight stays county-wide by 20% by 2031.
 - Increase the number of conferences/global meetings, with overnight stays by at least 20%.



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Primary Strategic Theme:
Tourism Innovation – Creating
World-Class Attractions,
Immersive Experiences, and
Signature Festivals



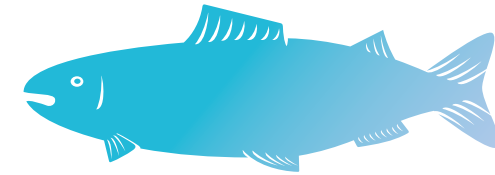
Food Tourism Development

- **Secondary Strategic Theme: Tourism Enterprise – Fuelling Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Economic Expansion**

- Expand the Sea Louth Scenic Seafood Trail by developing new experiences such as seafood tastings, workshops, and culinary tours by Q3 2027.
- Collaborate closely with Meath County Council to jointly support and promote Boyne Valley Flavours and the Centre of Food Culture, co-creating food events and educational programmes with an annual calendar starting in 2026, to include a food festival in Spring and Autumn.
- Assist local food producers through capacity-building workshops, marketing assistance, and inclusion in tourism promotions.
- Develop partnerships with restaurants, pubs, and markets to highlight local produce and seafood on menus and through special events.
- Support hospitality providers to cater for diverse dietary needs on their menus.
- Align with *A New Era for Irish Tourism*, the National Tourism Policy Statement that places food at the heart of Ireland's future tourism strategy.

Goals:

- Position Louth and the wider Boyne Valley as a leading food tourism destination in Ireland's Ancient East region.



- Increase visitor participation in food-based experiences and events across both counties.
- Support the sustainable growth of local food enterprises linked to tourism.

KPIs:

- Expansion of Sea Louth Scenic Seafood Trail experiences with at least 5 new offerings by 2028.
- Joint annual Sea Louth, Boyne Valley Flavours and Centre of Food Culture events programme published and delivered from 2026 onward.
- Assist with an increase in attendance at the Samhain Festival of Food and Culture by 10% year-on-year.
- Minimum of 20 local food producers in Louth participating in tourism-related programmes by 2029.
- Monitor visitor spend on food and drink through Louth's local data capture system, noting that *A New Era for Irish Tourism*, the National Tourism Policy Statement identifies food and drink as accounting for 34% of total visitor spend.



Heritage & Cultural Attractions

- Secondary Strategic Theme: County-Wide Discovery – Unlocking Urban, Rural, and Coastal Tourism

- Develop Masterplans for Millmount Quarter, Ardee Castle and County Museum Dundalk by 2031.
- Assist the campaign supporting the recognition of St. Peter's Church in Drogheda as a Basilica, enhancing its profile as a spiritual and cultural tourism destination by 2027.
- Explore the potential development and seek funding opportunities for a cultural centre that reflects the unique heritage of North Louth, and a unique immersive experience celebrating Louth's myths and legends.
- Partner with the Office of Public Works (OPW), local custodians, and heritage bodies to conserve and promote historic and spiritual sites across the county.
- Enhance visitor infrastructure at key heritage sites, including signage, accessibility improvements, and interpretive materials by 2031.





Goals:

- Position Louth as a premier destination for heritage and cultural tourism in Ireland.
- Increase visitor numbers and engagement at key heritage sites.
- Preserve and showcase Louth's unique cultural assets and stories.

KPIs:

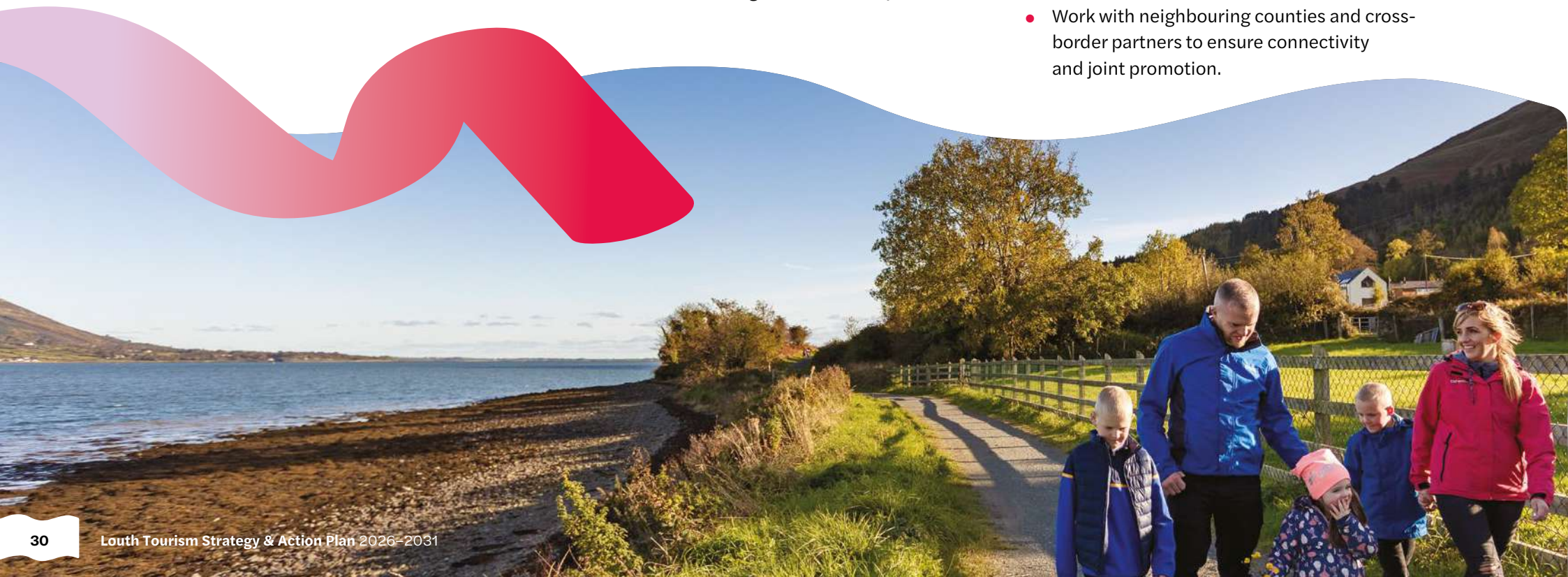
- Develop Masterplans for Millmount Museum, Ardee Castle, and the former Midlands East Regional Tourism Office, Dundalk by 2031.
- Secure at least €5 million in funding for heritage and cultural projects by 2030.
- Visitor numbers at Millmount Museum and other key heritage sites increase by 20% by 2031.
- Accessibility and visitor experience improvements delivered at 5 major heritage sites by 2031.

Primary Strategic Theme: **County-Wide Discovery** – Unlocking Urban, Rural, and Coastal Tourism

Greenways, Trails & The Táin Trail Reimagined

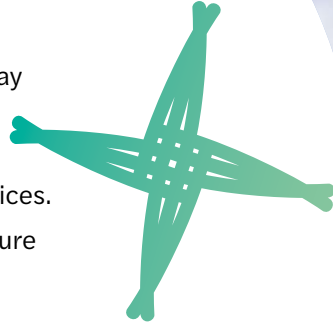
- Secondary Strategic Theme: Sustainable Growth – Balancing People, Planet, and Prosperity

- Continue to support the development and promote the Carlingford, Boyne, and Dundalk Greenways.
- Deliver trailhead infrastructure improvements across Louth, funded by the Shared Island programme, by 2031.
- Develop Brigid's Way, Boyne Valley Camino, and cross border trails as spiritual, wellness, and heritage routes with new interpretation and rest areas by 2029.
- Invest in improved signage, wayfinding, rest stops, and marketing campaigns to boost awareness and usage of trails county-wide.
- Activate the full Táin Trail Reimagined across five counties by supporting local chapters, storytelling hubs, and interpretive installations.
- Develop the Boyne Valley Drive as a scenic, cultural, and heritage route, enhancing signage, facilities, and visitor interpretation by 2029.
- Assist in the development of a signature outdoor experience in the Cooley Peninsula, encouraging exploration of lesser-known natural landscapes such as Ravensdale and Slieve Foye forests, aligned with the Carlingford Vision '31 and Cooley Peninsula Destination and Orientation Development Plan.
- Work with neighbouring counties and cross-border partners to ensure connectivity and joint promotion.



Goals:

- Establish Louth as a premier destination for greenway, trail, and outdoor tourism experiences.
- Increase visitor numbers and length of stay associated with trail tourism.
- Enhance local economies through trail-related tourism businesses and services.
- Provide high-quality trailhead infrastructure supporting increased visitor use.



KPIs:

- Completion of key greenway link projects in Louth by 2029.
- Delivery of Shared Island-funded trailhead infrastructure projects by 2031.
- Development and promotion of the Reimagined Boyne Valley Drive route by 2029.
- Development of 3 new spiritual/wellness trail routes by 2030.
- Increase in trail usage and visitor numbers by 25% by 2031.
- Number of cross-county and cross-border trail collaborations established, at least 3 by 2030.
- Visitor satisfaction with trail experiences rated at least 85% in surveys by 2031.

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Primary Strategic Theme: **Tourism Innovation –** Creating World-Class Attractions, Immersive Experiences, and Signature Festivals



Events & Festivals

- **Secondary Strategic Theme: Strategic Collaboration – Building Powerful Alliances**

- Support the expansion of the Lú Festival of Light and Home of Halloween with our partners in Fáilte Ireland, Meath County Council and Love Drogheda Business Improvement District (BID) to programme globally recognised offerings, helping increase scale and reach by 2030.
- Deliver an annual events toolkit for organisers, updated and published in 2026, alongside information sessions to share best practices and funding opportunities.
- Explore and facilitate the development of new events that celebrate Louth's unique heritage, culture, and natural environment to diversify the annual calendar by 2028.
- Support the Night-time Economy Officer in delivering Drogheda's Purple Flag, Night-time Economy Strategy and promoting the town as a vibrant night-time destination.
- Work with the Night-time Economy Officer to explore feasibility of extending the night-time economy throughout the county.
- Provide funding and capacity-building supports to grassroots and community-led festivals across Louth to foster local engagement.

Goals:

- Establish Louth as a leading festival and events destination in Ireland through strong support and collaboration.
- Increase festival attendance and visitor numbers throughout the year.
- Support sustainable growth and diversity of event offerings, including community-focused activities.

KPIs:

- Annual events toolkit published by Q3 2026.
- Annual events workshop in collaboration with Louth County Council events team, Night-time Economy Officer and Arts Officer to inform and assist the public when organising and applying for funding for events.
- Increase in attendance at supported festivals by 15% by 2029.
- Facilitation and support of new event concepts by 2027.
- Support provided to maintain and improve Drogheda's Purple Flag accreditation annually from 2026.



GREAT NIGHTS LOUTH





3. Public Realm and Place Making

Primary Strategic Theme: **County-Wide Discovery – Unlocking Urban, Rural, and Coastal Tourism**

Public Realm and Placemaking

- Secondary Strategic Theme: Inclusive Tourism – Designing Welcoming, Accessible, and Compassionate Visitor Experiences

- Enhance the aesthetics and functionality of town centres by upgrading public spaces, transport hubs, and coach parking facilities by 2030.
- Create vibrant community spaces using public art, colour, lighting, and storytelling elements to reflect Louth’s unique heritage and culture.
- Assist with the development of key infrastructure projects such as the floating pontoon on the River Boyne and Drogheda Boyne Gateway – Visitor Placemaking Study.

- Address derelict and vacant sites to improve their appearance - enhancing the visitor experience and community pride.
- Engage communities and artists in projects that enhance the local environment, promoting opportunities for visitors to participate in response to growing demand for these experiences.
- Assess the potential for water-based and cruise tourism.

Goals:

- Deliver welcoming, attractive, and accessible public spaces that enhance the visitor experience across Louth’s towns and villages.

- Support economic revitalisation and community well-being through quality public realm improvements.
- Bring Louth’s unique identity and creative spirit to life in public spaces.

KPIs:

- Public realm plans progressed in at least 2 areas by 2030.
- Reduction in number of derelict sites in key town centres by 2030.
- Visitor satisfaction with public spaces rated at least 65% by 2031.
- Coach parking provision developed for two major transport hubs - Dundalk and Drogheda.



4. Get Involved



Partnership Priorities

Achieving the vision set out in this plan requires a strong partnership approach. Louth will cultivate strategic alliances to maximise opportunities, drive innovation, and position the county as a leading tourism destination.

Strategic Partner Collaborations:

- **Louth County Council Internal Collaboration:** Champion cross departmental synergy to deliver transformative tourism initiatives.
- **Fáilte Ireland:** Co-create flagship projects and secure capital investment to elevate Louth's profile within Ireland's Ancient East and beyond.
- **Discover Boyne Valley & Meath County Council:** Jointly deliver immersive regional experiences and internationally acclaimed events that inspire visitor exploration.
- **Newry, Mourne and Down District Council:** Lead cross border trail integration and Shared Island-funded initiatives that redefine the visitor journey.
- **Creative & Cultural Institutions:** Partner with An Táin Arts Centre, Droichead Arts Centre, Highlanes Gallery, County Museum Dundalk, Drogheda Museum Millmount and Carlingford Heritage Centre to develop globally resonant cultural experiences.
- **Enterprise & Innovation Networks:** Collaborate with Local Enterprise Office, Chambers of Commerce, BIDs and Ardee Traders to embed tourism into economic development and entrepreneurship.
- **National Agencies and Cross-Border Bodies:** Work with OPW, National Parks & Wildlife Service, Loughs Agency, Coillte, Tourism Ireland, and sustainability leaders to protect and promote Louth's natural and historic assets.
- **National Partners:** Develop collaborations with Local Authorities and industry bodies such as AVEA – Association of Visitor Experiences and

Attractions, IAAT – Ireland's Association for Adventure Tourism, and ITOA – Inbound Tour Operators Association of Ireland that can benefit Louth.

Industry & Community Co-Creation:

- Empower local groups, creatives, and experience providers to co-design tourism offerings that reflect Louth's unique identity and inspire international visitors.
- Facilitate dynamic collaborations across food, arts, heritage, and hospitality to deliver unforgettable visitor experiences.

These partnerships are essential for Louth, unlocking socio-economic growth and international recognition, supported by relevant county, regional and national plans.

How Tourism Benefits Louth

Tourism is a vital indigenous industry and a cornerstone of Ireland’s economy, accounting for nearly 1 in 10 jobs across urban and remote areas. In 2024, domestic and international tourism generated €9.6 billion, with national targets aiming to increase this to €14.8 billion by 2031.

Today’s visitors seek authentic experiences. Guided by this plan and the new Visit Louth brand—which celebrates the county’s unique identity—Louth is perfectly positioned to grow tourism, boost local livelihoods and strengthen the economy.

Global Recognition & Economic Growth:

- Position Louth as a must-visit destination on the international stage, attracting high-value visitors and investment that fuels local prosperity.
- Support over 2,000 jobs across hospitality, retail, transport, and creative industries, driving inclusive economic expansion.

Revitalisation of Urban, Rural & Coastal Economies:

- Channel investment into town centres, villages, and coastal hubs, creating vibrant places to live, work, and explore.
- Enhance infrastructure and amenities that serve both residents and visitors, from trails and transport to cultural venues.

Cultural Pride & Community Well-being:

- Celebrate Louth’s myths, legends, and heritage through immersive storytelling and placemaking.
- Foster a strong sense of identity and pride through tourism that reflects local values and aspirations.

Connected Communities & Strategic Alliances:

- Strengthen ties across communities, counties, and borders through collaborative tourism development.
- Build a resilient, future-ready tourism sector that benefits all of Louth — urban and rural, coastal and inland.



How You Can Get Involved

Tourism thrives when communities, businesses, and individuals actively participate. Here are some ways you can contribute to making Louth a legendary destination:

Use and Promote Visit Louth Branding:

Adopt and showcase the Visit Louth brand in your business, community group or event to create a consistent and strong tourism identity.

Attend Public Forums and Workshops:

Participate in local tourism forums, consultations, and training sessions to stay informed, share your views, and help shape tourism development.

Host or Participate in Experience Development Programmes:

Get involved in creating or delivering unique local experiences, whether through arts, food, heritage, or outdoor activities.

Provide Feedback:

Share your thoughts on proposed trails, signage, events, and visitor facilities through surveys, community meetings, or online platforms.

Collaborate Locally:

Work with other businesses, community groups, and council teams to create a welcoming and vibrant tourism environment.

By engaging in these ways, you help ensure that tourism benefits everyone and that Louth's stories and places shine.



What Success Will Look Like by 2031

By 2031, the delivery of this strategy will have transformed Louth into a celebrated and sustainable tourism destination, marked by:



Growth in Tourism Activity:

Achieve at least 7% annual growth in domestic and international visitors, aligned with national targets, with targeted actions to accelerate demand during off peak periods.

Business and Employment Expansion:

Deliver a minimum 9% growth in tourism sector employment by 2031, supporting job creation and economic diversification.

Balanced Tourism Engagement:

Strong, inclusive tourism participation from urban, rural, and coastal communities, ensuring benefits are shared county-wide.

Award-Winning Promotion:

Recognition through national awards for outstanding communications, marketing, and brand development that raise Louth's profile domestically and internationally.

A Legendary Destination:

Louth is renowned for its rich stories, vibrant communities, unique visitor experiences and as the true home of Ireland's greatest legends.



Image Captions & Credits:

Page	Caption	Credit
Cover	Carlingford	Masterpiece Aerial Photography
2/3	Carlingford Lough Greenway	Sea Louth
4/5	Cockle Pickers, Blackrock	Sea Louth
6	Greenore	Sea Louth
8	Family on Beach	Fáilte Ireland
11	Baltray Beach	Sea Louth
12	Carlingford Lough Greenway	Tourism Ireland
14	Hill Walking - Slieve Foye	Anam Tours
15	Old Mellifont Abbey	Eilish Tierney for Fáilte Ireland
16	Visit Louth Launch Image	Visit Louth
17	Lú Festival of Light, Drogheda	Visit Louth
18	Highlanes Gallery, Drogheda	Visit Louth
19	Proleek Dolmen	Masterpiece Aerial Photography
20	Sail Training Bursary	Drogheda Port
21	Carlingford Castle & Harbour	Tourism Ireland
	Blackrock	Sea Louth
	Clogherhead	Sea Louth
	Boyne Valley Walking Tours	Love Drogheda
22	Port Oriel, Clogherhead	Sea Louth
23	Blackrock	Sea Louth
24	Ghan House, Carlingford	Tourism Ireland – Ghan House
	Fairways Hotel, Dundalk	Fairways Hotel
	The Marcy Hotel, Drogheda	The Marcy Hotel
25	Glamping at Gyles Quay	Gyles Quay Caravan Park
26	Seafood Selection	Sea Louth
27	Glyde Inn, Annagassan	Glyde Inn
	Urban Indian Artisan Food Producer	Visit Louth
	Dining at Ballymacscanlon	Ballymacscanlon Hotel
28	Cú Chulainn's Castle, Dundalk	Masterpiece Aerial Photography
	St. Laurence's Gate, Drogheda	Visit Louth
	Ardee Castle	Visit Louth
29	Monasterboice High Cross	Fáilte Ireland
	Millmount, Drogheda	Fáilte Ireland
30	Carlingford Lough Greenway	Sea Louth
31	Brigid of Faughart mural by Artist Friz	EPSO Dundalk
32	Dundalk Pride Festival	Outcomers Dundalk
	Cottage Market, Lú Festival of Light, Drogheda	Visit Louth
33	Glas Quartet, Ferdia Festival, Ardee	Visit Louth
	Stilt walker, Lú Festival of Light, Drogheda	Visit Louth
	The Northern Lights Celebrating Brigid, Dundalk	Visit Louth
34	Destination Town Signage, Drogheda	Visit Louth
35	Market Square, Dundalk	Martin McElligott
36	Skypark, Carlingford	Antonella Gonzalez
37	Droichead Arts Centre	Droichead Arts Centre
38	Outdoor Activity, Carlingford	Tourism Ireland
39	Hill Walking in Louth	Boyne Valley Trails
	Carlingford Castle Viewpoint	Tourism Ireland
41	Drogheda Brass Band	Jenny Callanan for Boyne Mid-Summer Festival
Back Cover	Sailing on the River Boyne, Drogheda	Visit Louth





5. Legendary Louth Timeline

This timeline has been created to highlight why Louth is legendary. Please use it to spread the word!



BOANN

Celtic Goddess

Creator of the River Boyne

c. 5000 BC



PROLEEK DOLMEN

Giants Table

One of Ireland's finest portal tombs, attributed to a Scottish Giant

c. 3000 BC



BATTLE OF THE BOYNE

Oldbridge House

Most significant battle in Irish history

1690



OLIVER PLUNKETT

St. Peter's Church

Archbishop & martyr: his preserved head is in St Peter's Church.

1625 - 1681



MEDIEVAL LOUTH

Towns & Castles

Medieval towns: Drogheda & Carlingford. Ardee Castle, Carlingford Castle & Roche Castle.

12th - 15th Centuries



MELLIFONT ABBEY

The first Cistercian abbey in Ireland

12th Century



ORIEL TRADITION

Ireland's Renaissance

200-year-old cultural revival of poetry, music and song.

1650 - 1850



KILDEMOCK'S

Jumping Church

An excommunicated man buried here caused the church wall to jump inward

1715



CÚ CHULAINN'S CASTLE

& Castletown Motte

Built by a local pirate: birthplace of Celtic warrior, Cú Chulainn

1780



OMEATH GAELTACHT

Irish Speaking Louth

At the heart of Irish language & culture

1700s-1900s



LUGH

Sun & Light God

Louth is named after Lugh: a symbol of light, skill and kingship

c. 1100 BC



TÁIN BÓ CÚAILNGE

The Cattle Raid of Cooley

Ireland's greatest epic, featuring the Cooley Peninsula

c. 1st Century BC



CÚ CHULAINN

Mythical Warrior

Celtic hero earns his name by killing a fierce guard dog with a hurl

c. 1st Century BC



FIONN MAC CUMHAILL

Salmon of Knowledge

Warrior gains eternal wisdom from a magical salmon in the River Boyne

c. 3rd Century AD



NORMAN INVASION

Millmount Fort

Norman motte & bailey castle is built on ancient ground

12th Century



VIKING SETTLEMENT

Annagassan

Vikings land at Linn Duachaill, one of Ireland's first settlements

c. 841 AD



MONASTERBOICE

Monastic Settlement

Muireadach's High Cross (5.5m), is the finest in Ireland

c. Late 500s AD



BRIGID

Born in Faughart

Patron saint of poets, healing, livestock and beer

c. 451 - 525 AD



CREATIVE LOUTH

Music & Arts

Music and creative arts are the county's heartbeat

20th Century



LEGENDARY LOUTH

Urban - Rural - Coastal

A place to have a legendary time with welcoming & witty people

21st Century

VISIT LOUTH

Out here, it's legendary!

✉ tourism@louthcoco.ie
✕ @VisitLouthIE
f Visit Louth
@ @visitlouthie

Find Out More & Stay Involved

Visit www.visitlouth.ie to explore updates, download project maps, and register for community or industry engagement opportunities.

Let's make Louth legendary – together.

