

Re: Powerstown Allotment Site and Sites on Either Side Along the Road.

Powerstown Allotment Association are requesting your support to retain the above location as a PERMANENT Natural Green Space for the use of Local Schools, Residents, Churches, and Allotment holders.

At a recent meeting with Fingal County Council, Powerstown Allotment Association, was informed that Powerstown Allotment Site (regarded as prime development property by Fingal Co. Co.) could be taken back in the near future for local infrastructural development.

We are making a different case for this Allotment site, AND the sites located on either side.

Many studies have shown that living in densely populated urban areas has a detrimental effect on our mental health. Mental health is surely one of our most precious possessions.

Yet current planning policy in Dublin 15 is for even higher density developments, that is, multi-story apartment blocks. The negative social impact of the former Ballymun tower blocks, and other high density black spots are all forgotten, and another generation of young families (the life blood of the county?) is to be forced to occupy apartment housing with insufficient natural outdoor space.

Studies have also shown that access to the natural environment carries significant positive impact, helping to alleviate the stresses of urban life. At Powerstown Allotments, increasing numbers of young families have signed up, looking for connection with the natural world. People of all ages and nationalities now enjoy the fresh air, growing their own food, and the contact with nature that these Allotments provide.

Currently, Powerstown Allotments are the ONLY public Allotment site in Dublin 15, which is one of the most densely populated areas in Dublin. International companies providing high employment continue to locate here, followed by young and often highly trained workers, and their young families. With Dublin planners now relying on high density housing to provide for the growing population, we suggest that more allotment sites, and areas of natural habitat are needed, to provide relief from this concrete jungle. Fingal has a great opportunity to take the lead in Dublin 15, in providing small local natural areas, which allow for interactive experience and education rather than just the acres of grass in most large public parks.

The three sites in question offer a very good cross section of natural habitats. Their proximity to two primary schools, a new housing estate and a large church, makes this proposal ideal from a community perspective. The opportunity exists almost ready made to offer access to nature-based education as well as outdoor activity, with minimal infrastructural cost.

In brief, the small forest of native pines to the LEFT of the Allotments provides sanctuary for birds, insects and mammals. This includes nesting falcons and buzzards, a visiting woodpecker, rabbits, and there has also been a sighting of a pine martin.

The partial wetlands to the RIGHT of the Allotments, have a very healthy population of frogs (a protected species), a good cross section of songbirds, pygmy shrews and a small tribe of pheasants. The wetland may have a population of newts, and a long-eared owl is nesting in the trees. We assume the birds of prey, and perhaps the pine martin have been drawn by our population of rabbits, small birds and frogs. A circle of life exists here.

All sites have a good variety of pollinating and other insects, which have proved a source of endless fascination to the children on the allotment site. The allotment association promotes pesticide free growing and growing for wildlife, and nurtures the native Irish honey bee on site. Our site is of great importance to the well being of the plot holders, who apart from growing their own food with gusto take a great interest in the local environment and wildlife.

This pocket of natural wonders on the Powerstown Road, should not be taken away from our urban children. We therefore intend to propose these three sites as a pilot project to Fingal Co Council, for the protection of small areas of nature in the urban area, to provide education and to alleviate the stresses of high density living in the expanding commercial growth of Dublin 15.

Will you and your party support us? We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you at your convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Ritamary Bolton

For Powerstown Allotment Committee