



Preserving our **Placenames Heritage**

# In the Naming of New Developments

Produced by **Cork County Council**  
As an action of the County Heritage Plan

## Introduction

Irish placenames are an integral part of the cultural heritage of Ireland. They are a valuable source of knowledge and link to our past, giving meaning to our landscape and insight into former landuses, customs and practices. The historical and cultural profile of townlands, parishes, counties and even countries can be given greater depth and richness through study of placenames. Much of the thought, folklore, genealogy, religion, daily life and work of those living on and interacting with their landscape can be appreciated through placenames study. Placenames can also provide an insight into the climate, flora and fauna of the region studied. Irish placenames have evolved over the centuries, many being anglicised versions of very ancient Irish (Gaelic) placenames. Others derive from Old Norse, Norman French and English.

County Cork is a rich source of placenames. There are over 5,600 townlands in the County and over 100,000 references to places in the Cork Placenames Archive located in Cork County Library. Recent changes in Irish agricultural practices, urban spread, afforestation, rural depopulation and road building, have altered the landscape and man's relationship with it. This generation is faced with a unique challenge and opportunity to preserve our link to the past through the protection of our local placenames.

The purpose of this document is to encourage the use of existing placenames in the naming of new residential and other developments in accordance with Objective Env 6-1 of the County Development Plan, 2009. It is an objective to promote local heritage by encouraging the use of local place names of geographical, historical or cultural names in the naming of new residential and other developments. Such an approach will be a requirement of planning permissions for new developments.

The leaflet includes some guiding principles and directs users to the primary sources of information on this valuable aspect of our heritage.

The following should be taken into account when proposing a name for new developments:

- Give priority to names with well established local usage or names that may have fallen into disuse but were previously associated with the location of the proposed development.
- Ensure that the name chosen is not already in use within the locality and that there is no duplication of addresses.
- Where there are no suitable local names in use, consider names appropriate to the natural or cultural features in the surrounding landscape, or identified with the history, archaeology, architecture or culture of the area.
- Names should incorporate recognisable words and be easily pronounceable.
- A correct Irish language form should be provided for all English language names. Make sure to check grammar and spelling for each word.
- Where an existing Irish name is proposed, this should not be translated.
- Names of persons (deceased) who have made a valuable contribution to the cultural or community life, or made a contribution to the county or country may also be used.
- The name of a living person should not be proposed unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- It is advised to consider the name of your development as early as possible during the planning phase and to consult with the planners on same.

## Guiding Principles for Naming New Developments

## Sources of Historical Information

Many of the sources listed in this document are available in the Local Studies Department of the County Library or are available to browse online. In addition to the sources referenced below, there is a substantial body of published literature on the local history and placenames of Co. Cork, published as monographs and as articles in local history journals which may be consulted at the County Library. Other published histories which may include information on local placenames in the county can be identified using Keyword Searches using the online Library Catalogue.

### 1 Key References

The first major attempt to officially record placenames was in the 1830s through the first government mapping of the country by the Ordnance Survey (1836-1841). Some key reference works dating from this time are noted below. These sources are held in the Local Studies Department of Cork County Library where they can be consulted.

**Townland Indexes** - The General Alphabetical Index to the Townlands and Towns, Parishes and Baronies of Ireland: based on the Census of 1851 (Official listing of all of the town-land names in Ireland.). A similar compilation is A directory of

townlands, district electoral divisions and ancient baronies in the County of Cork, published by Cork County Council in 1985.

**Ordnance Survey Maps** - These maps record townland names, sub-denominations and a range of other geographical and topographical features. A set of the first edition OS maps for Co Cork dating from about 1840 is held in the Local Studies Department in the Cork County Library. Duplicate sets are also available for consultation at the Mallow and Skibbereen branch libraries. Historic maps can be consulted online and free of charge at the Historic Map Archive on [www.osi.ie](http://www.osi.ie). The main Ordnance Survey archive including original town plans is held at the National Archives in Dublin.

**The Tithe Applotment Books** - These records of land occupancy predate the mid-19th century Valuation Records and the Ordnance Survey, which established the modern identification and spelling of place names. For this reason the tithe books sometimes provide names of places that cannot be readily identified from other sources.

### 2 Archives

**The Cork Placenames Archive** - The Cork Placenames Archive contains a comprehensive collection of the place names of County Cork collated by Logainmneacha Chorcaí between 1996 and 2008. The Archive was built upon the foundations laid by the Ordnance Survey Name Books which were compiled in the 1830s. It lists places and placenames collected during that time and includes previously unrecorded information such as the names of individual fields, roads and other features of the landscape. The archive is available for consultation in Cork County Library.

**Cork City and County Archives** - This local service preserves original documentary records that may contain place and placename significant information. Examples of such records include:

- Local government records (mainly 19th and 20th century but including some material going back as far as 1600);
- Landed estate papers;
- Solicitors and legal papers;
- School records;
- Local club and society records;
- Personal and family papers.

These records often contain early maps, plans and drawings as well as documents containing references to places and placenames, landscape and land holdings, landowners as well as information on local cultural heritage, people and historical events. See [www.corkarchives.ie](http://www.corkarchives.ie) for more information.

### 3 Published Sources Placenames - General

- Flanagan, Deirdre and Lawrence (2002), *Irish place names*, 2nd edition, Gill & MacMillan (The most comprehensive modern guide to Irish place-names, providing a list of the root or stem words that occur in almost all place-names, as well as a gazetteer of over 3,000 Irish place names and their derivations.)
- Joyce, P W (1972) *The Origin & History of Irish Names of Places*, fourth edition, E.P. Publishing
- Lewis, S (1837) *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland*. Samuel Lewis first published his two volumes of The Topographical Dictionary of Ireland in 1837. His main aim, was to give in 'a condensed form', a reliable and unbiased description of each place. Arranged alphabetically by place (village, parish, town, etc.), it provides a comprehensive description of all Irish localities as they existed at the time of publication. Lewis gives details about every parish, town and village in Ireland, including numbers of inhabitants, the economy, history, topography, religion and parish structures, administration and courts, schools, and much more. He also gives the names of the principal inhabitants (generally landlords, merchants and professionals). Lewis's dictionary is the first detailed study of its kind for Ireland, and since it was published just prior to the Irish Potato Famine (1845-49) it is a valuable resource used widely by historians and genealogists alike. The first edition of Lewis dictionary is available to view online at [www.osi.ie](http://www.osi.ie).

### 4 Published Sources Placenames - Cork

There are a number of published sources relating exclusively to the place-names of local areas of Co Cork. These sources, often compiled for the now obsolete administrative area of barony, are usually arranged by barony, parish and townland and are also likely to mention sub-denominations, i.e., named areas within a townland or parish which names have never received official status, as well as antiquities and topographical features in each townland.

- *Archaeological Inventory of County Cork* (1992-2000), 5 vols. Stationery Office (These volumes provide a definitive record of the antiquities and historical sites of Co Cork).
- O'Donoghue, Bruno (1986) *Parish histories and place names of West Cork*.
- Bowman, Michael (2000) *Place names and antiquities of the Barony of Duhallow*.
- Mac Carthaigh, Micheal, [*Place names of the Beara peninsula*] in *Dinnseanchas*, lml. 2, 1966, lml. 5, 1972, 1974, lml. 6, 1977 and in *JCHAS*, Vol 85, 1980
- O'Leary, KV (1918,1919), *The place names and antiquities of the Barony of Kerrycurrihy, Co Cork* in *Jn. of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society (JCHAS)*, Vol 24-25, 1918, 1919.
- O Riordain, Sean P. (1931-35) *The place names and antiquities of Kinalmeaky Barony, Co Cork* in *JCHAS*, Vol 36-40, 1931-35
- Power, (Canon) Patrick (1917-18,1923), *Place-names and antiquities of SE Cork (Barony of Barrymore)* in *PRIA*, Vol 34,C, 1917-1923.

### 5 Other Sources of Information on Placenames of Ireland

**Local Sources** - Many local history and other groups undertake research into local placenames. Such groups are an important source of historical information and local lore and will be able to provide information and suggestions that published sources do not contain.

**The Placenames Branch** - The Placenames Branch of the Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs undertakes research in order to establish the correct Irish language forms of the placenames of Ireland and to publish them for official use. They have developed the Placenames Database of Ireland which provides the correct Irish language forms of Irish placenames. This work is available to view at [www.logainm.ie](http://www.logainm.ie).

### Contact Details

Cork County Library,  
Reference and Local Studies Section, County  
Library Building,  
Carrigrohane Road, Cork.  
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Cork City and County Archives,  
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Blackpool, Cork.  
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