

# MAJOR FOCUS ON FOREST FIRE PREVENTION IN MEATH

Meath County Council, in collaboration with Coillte, has produced a new promotional video to facilitate a better understanding of how to enjoy forestry areas within the Royal County through land-based wildfire prevention measures and a greater awareness of litter pollution.

Land-based wildfires can take the form of forest, gorse and bog fires or in severe cases a combination of all three. This promotional video points towards both wildfire prevention measures along with improved litter management that can be taken through personal awareness and responsibility whilst enjoying these natural amenities.

Individual experiences and insights from Meath County Council firefighters and environment staff throughout the video, along with contributions from Coillte staff, highlight the need and steps to be taken to both respect and protect the wildland areas of forests and bogs.

The video also highlights the severe impact and devastation these wildland fires can have on the environment and communities when these areas of forestry and bogs are not treated appropriately.

It also includes the actual footage from forest fires that heavily impacted the surrounding communities of Kildalkey and Brannockstown in 2018, where over 120 acres of forest and bog were destroyed.

Meath County Council's Chief Fire Officer Sheila Broderick said: "Unfortunately, in recent years, the occurrence and consequent impact of these land-based wildfires on the environment, and the people who live in

the surrounding areas, has increased dramatically. Wildfires can happen at any time of the year, particularly during a dry spell.

"Whilst we enjoy these areas of natural beauty, we have to be mindful of how to enjoy them safely and how to protect them, and use simple measures, such as not lighting fires in particular barbecues in or near woodland areas and to use the proper extinguishment of cigarettes and other smoking materials."

## COLLABORATION ON WILDFIRE PREVENTION

She also stated that the scale and size of these 2018 land-based wildfires had been the biggest challenge faced by Meath County Fire and Rescue Service. "These types of incidents test and stretch the resilience of the fire service by the substantial amount of time, personnel and resources required to manage these land-based wildfires safely and effectively.

"Meath County Fire and Rescue Service is working closely together with Coillte towards a collaborative wildfire prevention approach. This work requires sharing of knowledge on wildfire prevention management techniques which will be adapted to local area needs within the County of Meath to allow the development of joint response plans."

Meath County Council's Environment Officer Declan Grimes added "Unfortunately forests are frequently used by illegal dumpers to dispose of waste; this waste acts as a fuel when a fire occurs.

"We all have a responsibility to safely dispose of the waste we produce and to only use an authorised waste collection permit holder. Please be vigilant and report any suspicious activity to Meath County Council. Email [environment@meathcoco.ie](mailto:environment@meathcoco.ie) or call 046-9097200," he advised.



**We are all in this together, do your part to prevent wildfires.**

Meath County Council and Coillte encourage people to view the video on all social media platforms and share it with as many people as possible to get these important messages into the community. The video can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/a7recKHsPSI>