

WHAT'S THE PROJECT ABOUT?

Dig Tralee is a community archaeology project that will explore the hillfort site at Knockanacuig, on the outskirts of Tralee. A number of excavations of a two-three week duration will be carried out over the coming summers starting in July this year.

WHO'LL BE RUNNING THE SHOW?

The project is an initiative of Kerry County Council, who will be responsible for the excavation, and Kerry County Museum who will take charge of community engagement.

WHY EXCAVATE THIS SITE?

Knockanacuig Hillfort was once an enclosure of significant size and height that commanded a view of the surrounding area for miles around. Enclosures like this are normally found to be around 2,500 years old but Knockanacuig may have even older monuments within its ramparts. This could well be where the town of Tralee began, long before the Normans arrived and established an urban centre. But now, as the modern town encroaches on all sides, the landscape context in which the monument sits is being lost bit by bit.

Dig Tralee provides an opportunity to find out more about the site, to reinstate its prominence in the history of the town, and to connect people today with the town's earliest inhabitants.

HOW MANY VOLUNTEERS WILL BE CHOSEN?

The final number will only be known after the recruitment phase closes but we hope that people are excited by the project and keen to get involved. Places will probably be limited but we intend to accommodate as many recruits as possible.



The location of the excavation is to the east of Clifford's Garage and Dillon's Waste & Recycling Centre

WHAT DATES AND TIMES?

The 2022 dig will run from July 4–15, operating five days per week, Monday to Friday. The day starts at 8:00 am and finishes at 4:30 pm. There will be a 20 minute morning break at 10:30 and 40 minutes for lunch at 1 pm.

HOW LONG DO I HAVE TO VOLUNTEER FOR?

A three-day work slot is felt to be the minimum needed to gain a true sense of how an archaeology excavation operates but you can also sign up for five or even the full ten days. There is, however, no guarantee that you'll get the number of days requested but we'll do our best when it comes to accommodating people's requests.

WILL THE WORK BE STRENUOUS?

Think of it in terms of gardening – a mix of digging, hoeing and trowel work – but with quite a bit of time spent on your knees. There will also be some tasks that'll require the use of wheelbarrows and buckets.



The shape and impressive size of the hillfort enclosure at Knockanacuig is still visible today despite the surrounding modern development. It straddles the road but the 2022 dig will concentrate on the west side. The black and white image taken in 1968 shows the footprint of a barrow that was sited within the enclosure. Barrows are circular mounds of earth and/or stone raised over a burial and archaeologists are intrigued by the scale and location of this one.

WHAT SHOULD I WEAR?

Dress for all eventualities as you'll be exposed to the elements. Waterproofs of course, as there will be little shelter but also allow for working without shade under a summer sun. Consider the following:

- A hat and sunscreen
- Work gloves will be provided but you may already have a favourite pair that you'd prefer to wear
- Kneeling pads will also be provided but, if you have them, you may prefer strap-on knee pads

WHAT ABOUT FOOTWEAR?

In normal conditions trainers and walking shoes are fine for most tasks but boots are best for digging. Wellies may be needed if the going is wet.

DO I NEED TO BRING ANY TOOLS?

No, all tools and equipment will be provided.

WILL THERE BE FACILITIES ON SITE?

Yes, both male and female toilets will be on site along with a cabin for breaks and lunch.

DO I NEED TO BRING A LUNCH?

Yes, we advise that you bring a packed lunch with you each day. A flask is also recommended as there won't be facilities to boil a kettle. A personal water bottle is also a good idea.

CAN I TAKE PHOTOS AND SHARE THEM?

The short answer is no. The dig will be a properly constituted, licenced archaeological excavation. There are rules and conventions that must be followed, both for the protection of vulnerable, exposed archaeological features and the people working on the site. Therefore no unauthorized photography or recording can be permitted. A professional film crew, however, has been commissioned to make a short video about the project.