



Rossmore Forest is a 410ha mixed woodland located to the South of Monaghan Town. It is owned by Coillte and managed by Monaghan County Council who appointed The Paul Hogarth Company to prepare a Forest Park Masterplan in 2017 and then deliver a play park as one of its key recommendations. The unique forest setting and growing research into nature deprivation and associated physical and mental health issues for children (which develops into the adult population) prompted us to consider a play park solution with the nature, learning and fun at its core.

- The following design principles were agreed and delivered into the final design:
- Collaboration with local children (the real play experts!) artists and community groups
 - Celebration of Rossmore Forests existing sense of place
 - Use of natural materials from the site/forest
 - Inclusivity with no segregation between ages or abilities
 - Carefully designed play opportunities to provide risk and challenge
 - Sustainable locally sourced materials with minimal hard surfaces.
 - Biodiversity fully integrated with significant space provided for native woodland and wildflower.

One of the first issues was the existing perception of what 'playgrounds' are. Often they include vivid colours and shapes which can over stimulate children, they rarely include nature which has a much more calming and developmental potential. Therefore school, client, community engagement was required to justify a nature inspired approach and to create something bespoke.

The result has been a revelation for Rossmore and Co. Monaghan with Coillte recording the most significant increase in footfall in any of their forest parks after opening. Local and regional visitors are sharing the new resource as well as it becoming a regular outing for the original schools who were instrumental in the design process.

