



Bid for City Status

Bangor

County Down



Ards and
North Down
Borough Council

HANC: QUAEM: VIDEATIS:
 DESCRIPSIT: DELINEAVIT: QUAEM
 SIVE: DE: BELLLO: DICITUR:

FERRARUM: ORBIS:
RICHARDUS DE HALINGHAM
A: S: CIRCA:



The Hereford Mappa Mundi c.1300AD, shown pictured, refers in its original Latin form to 'Civitas Benair', which translates to 'City of Bangor'.



Bid for City Status

Bangor

County Down

There are three tenets to Bangor's claim for city status –

-  HERITAGE
-  HEART
-  HOPE

Bangor's **Heritage** claim tells of global monastic influence, renowned Christian scholarship, industrial growth and innovation, and proud naval traditions. Known as 'Bangor Mor', meaning 'Great Bangor', in the medieval period, Bangor was identified on the c.1300AD Hereford Mappa Mundi as having city status. Thus, in its history and its heritage, which are still celebrated across the town, Bangor is a city. It remains worthy of that status to the present day.

Bangor's **Heart** claim tells of our present and why people love to live, do business and visit here.

Bangor's **Hope** claim tells of our plans for the future and why we see Bangor once again being 'Bangor Mor' [Great Bangor].

"The people of Bangor are extremely proud of their 'Civitas Benair'. They celebrate its heritage, they champion its heart and they look forward with great hope and ambition to the future.

Bangor is growing in stature as a location to live, work, visit and invest and deserves, once again, to have a prominent place on the world map.

I fully support Bangor's bid to become one of the UK's great cities."

Stephen Farry, MP for North Down

GABOLLAM
 LINDINGAM
 M:C:C:C





'The Bangor community... brought the Light of the World of their Lord into the darkness of Barbarian Europe.'

'Light of the World' – Dr Ian Adamson OBE



The Bangor Bell, dating from the ninth century, is one of the area's most treasured Christian Heritage artifacts.



BANGOR'S HERITAGE CLAIM

Bangor's Christian Heritage

Bangor's influence upon the spread of Christianity and religious scholarship across Europe during the 6-8th centuries is well documented and widely celebrated.

Legend states that Ireland first became a Christian country during the 5th Century, through the energies of St Patrick. Tradition holds that while camped in Bangor, St Patrick and his companions 'beheld the valley filled with heavenly light and with a multitude of the host of heaven'. From this Bangor was described at the 'Vallis Angelorum' or 'Valley of the Angels'.

It was to this valley that St Comgall came and established Bangor Abbey, in 558AD – 50 years before Canterbury Cathedral was built. It was the most famous of all his monasteries and a complete settlement with church, college, school, hospital and living quarters. Despite the austere lifestyle, students flocked to Bangor and throughout the period anything between 2,000 and 4,000 monks lived on site at a time. The monks' achievements became the wonder of their age and contributed to Ireland's world-renowned reputation as the 'Isle of Saints and Scholars'.

It was from Bangor Abbey that Comgall and his disciples undertook missionary activities to found new churches across Europe. Bangor's influence far outweighed its size and it became known as 'Bangor Mor', meaning 'Great Bangor', to distinguish it from its British contemporaries and in recognition that it was home to the greatest monastic school in Ulster.

While the Church remained strong in Ireland, the invasion of barbarian tribes was threatening Christianity in Europe and in 589AD St Columbanus and 12 companions, including St Gall, set sail for the continent. Columbanus championed Christianity during the dark ages in what is now France, Italy, Austria, Luxembourg and Switzerland. Some of his monastic sites operate to this day. Gall gave his name to St Gallen in Switzerland, the city where the renowned Unesco Heritage site of the Abbey of St Gall, with its rich and unique library, is located. Bangor has been twinned with Bregenz in Austria since 1987 given St Columbanus and St Gall's work as missionaries there.

The end of the 8th Century also saw the end of a golden period of Bangor's Christian history.

The Viking invasion early in the 9th Century was the beginning of a long period of devastation as Bangor was repeatedly raided and sacked. It is thought that the Bangor Bell was buried to hide it from Viking invaders. It was not discovered again until it was unearthed by workmen digging in Bangor Abbey's graveyard in 1780. The 'Antiphony of Bangor' is an ancient Latin manuscript believed to have been written in Bangor in the 7th century. It is older than the celebrated 'Book of Kells' and regarded as one of the most precious surviving witnesses to the Irish Church in Ireland. The manuscript, a collection of written hymns, canticles, collects, prayers and anthems is now one of the most precious volumes in the Ambrosian Library in Milan.

It was in the 12th Century that the church in Bangor witnessed a revival when St Malachy came to Bangor and began to restore the monastery. Traces of the old foundations and a part of the wall remain in place to this day. Malachy played a vital role, not only in the rebirth of Bangor, but also of the Church in Ireland.

Christianity remains a strong part of Bangor's identity for many, with more than 20 churches from a range of denominations playing a central part in community life. Such is the significance and impact made by the monastery at Bangor Abbey and the men who once worshiped there that it is celebrated across Europe to the present day through initiatives such as the Columban Way.

The 'Civitas Benair' (City of Bangor) in the Mappa Mundi

The importance of Bangor on a world scale is marked by its inclusion on the famous medieval map of the world known as the 'Hereford' Mappa Mundi c.1300AD. Such was Bangor's Abbey's importance as a centre of learning that the map includes Bangor as one of only five locations in Ireland alongside Dublin, Kildare, Armagh and the River Bann. The original map has Bangor marked in Latin as 'civitas benair', which translates to 'City of Bangor'.

Bangor was given 'city status' several hundred years ago – it would complete the circle to restore that nomenclature in 2022.



Christian scholar, C.S. Lewis was a regular visitor to the area throughout his life. He enjoyed the beautiful views over Belfast Lough from the grounds of Bangor Castle. In his own words; "Heaven is Oxford lifted and placed in the middle of County Down."

Bangor's Growth and Innovation

During the Bronze Age, almost 5,000 years ago, the first metalworkers came to Ireland. With them came technological developments that would change civilisation forever. Evidence of the work that these people did has been found all over Bangor and is displayed in North Down Museum, which is located in the town centre.

In the 17th century Bangor flourished with the influx of settlers during the Plantation of Ulster. Bangor was distinguished by King James in March 1612 with the granting of Borough Status. Following local government reorganisation across Northern Ireland in 2015, Ards and North Down, encompassing Bangor, was granted Borough Status by Rouge Croix Pursuivant, one of the Officers of Arms to HM The Queen from the College of Arms in London.

Hugh Montgomery and James Hamilton were the largest landowners in Bangor at that time and central to the town's development. It is thought that Hamilton built the first Bangor Castle. To manage his estate and determine his land boundaries, Hamilton commissioned cartographer Thomas Raven to map his holdings in 1625. Known as the Raven Maps, these remain the only complete Folio of Plantation Maps in Ireland. Bangor Castle and the 80 houses built for the settlers can be seen on them. The Raven Maps are on display in North Down Museum.

Some 50 years later, around 1674, Clondeboye demesnes was settled. It remains one of the few great estates in Northern Ireland in the ownership of the original family. It is celebrated for the legacy of the 1st Marquess (1826-1902), who laid out the historic parklands under the guidance of James Frazer. The project was so extensive that the estate still boasts the largest area of broadleaved woodland in Northern Ireland. He also oversaw the building of Helen's Tower. The upper floor of the Tower is adorned with poems by the greatest contemporary writers including Alfred Tennyson, Robert Browning and Rudyard Kipling. A replica tower, the Ulster Tower, stands in Thiepval, France.

It was built through public subscription in memory of those from Ulster who lost their lives in the Great War, many of whom trained in a camp at Clondeboye.

There are other significant periods in Bangor's past, with many interesting and significant stories to tell, from its industrial heritage as an important port for cotton production, to it becoming a popular holiday resort in Victorian and Edwardian times with the laying of the railway line in 1865. Many houses built during this period continue to line Bangor's seafront today.

Bangor's Military Traditions

Bangor, a coastal town, is justly proud of its naval heritage.

Barry Bingham, who was born at Bangor Castle in 1881, had the distinction of being the only member of the Royal Navy to be awarded the Victoria Cross while in captivity during World War One. The award was in recognition of his actions during the Battle of Jutland.

Due to its location at the mouth of Belfast Lough, Bangor became a key site for allied naval forces during World War II. Full-scale landing exercises took place at Ballyholme Bay. In May 1944 Supreme Commander Dwight D Eisenhower visited Bangor, inspecting manoeuvres before giving a motivational speech to 30,000 assembled troops. Shortly afterwards ships, gunboats and destroyers left for Normandy and D-Day.

The significance of the General's address and the role of Bangor in the D-Day landings led to the pier being renamed the Eisenhower Pier in 2005, with the renaming ceremony being led by General Eisenhower's granddaughter.

It is considered an immense honour to the town that the Royal Navy has named two ships HMS Bangor. The former HMS Bangor was the lead ship of the Bangor-class of minesweepers in World War II and the current HMS Bangor, a Sandown class counter-measures minehunter commissioned in 1999. HMS Bangor is currently deployed in the Gulf. The ship and crew dock in Bangor on a regular basis and have played a key role in many local events in recent years.

"From here started the long hard march to Allied victory. Without Northern Ireland I do not see how the American forces could have concentrated to begin the invasion of Europe."

General Dwight D Eisenhower



Bangor's Royal Connections

Many members of the Royal Family have visited Bangor, including Her Majesty the Queen on two occasions. Notable Royal visits to Bangor include:

1903: King Edward VII toured Ireland as part of his Coronation celebrations. He was the last reigning monarch to visit the North and South of Ireland before Queen Elizabeth in 2011. The King and Queen Alexandra sailed out of Bangor on the Royal Yacht. A huge stand was built in the Esplanade so that the children of the town could see the Royal couple's departure.

1924: The Duke and Duchess of York

The Royal couple landed at the pier and visited the Clandeboye estate. The town was decorated using donations from townspeople.

1932: Prince Edward

Prince Edward visited to officially open Stormont. The people of Bangor turned out to welcome him from the shore as he passed the town sailing down Belfast Lough.

1958: The Queen Mother

The Queen Mother arrived at Bangor pier, just as she had in 1924. The streets were lined with thousands of Bangor children, who had been given two and a half hours off school. The reason for the Queen Mother's visit was to attend the national conference of the Royal British Legion Women's Section at the Tonic cinema.

1961: The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh

This is the most celebrated of all the Royal visits. Enthusiastic welcoming took place on the pier and in the town. The Royal couple visited Bangor Castle and then the Queen had lunch at the Royal Ulster Yacht Club whilst the Duke raced in the Regatta.

2009: The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh

returned to Bangor and visited one of the town's most important organisations: The Coastguard Agency. The Royal couple had lunch at the Royal Ulster Yacht Club, where they met Councillors and Aldermen from North Down Council.

2013: Princess Anne visited to officially open the Council's Aurora Aquatic and Leisure Complex in Bangor. She heralded the complex as a true legacy of the 2012 Olympics and congratulated the Council for creating a hub for Northern Irish sport.

2016: Princess Anne visited Royal Ulster Yacht Club to celebrate its 150th anniversary.

2021: The Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall visited Bangor Market. The market has traded for 98 years and continues to strive and grow. During the visit to Bangor, the Duchess of Cornwall also visited the Kilcooley Women's Centre to meet staff and participants of the Camilla Book Club.

The Royal Ulster Yacht Club/ Sir Thomas Lipton

During both of her visits to Bangor The Queen has visited Royal Ulster Yacht Club. The Club was given the title of 'Royal Ulster' in 1869 by Queen Victoria, just four years after being established.

The Clubhouse has commanding views over Belfast Lough and is one of the finest examples of Edwardian building in Ireland. It was in 1899 that the Royal Ulster Yacht Club, through Sir Thomas Lipton, challenged for the America's Cup.

Sir Thomas Johnstone Lipton, 1st Baronet, KVCO was a self-made man, merchant, and yachtsman. He created the world-famous Lipton tea brand.

King Edward VII and King George V both shared their interest in yachting with Lipton and enjoyed his company. Between 1899 and 1930 he challenged the American holders of the America's Cup through the Royal Ulster Yacht Club five times. His well-publicised efforts to win the cup made him and his tea brand famous in America – the American people celebrated his tenacity. Franklin D Roosevelt, then a State Governor, sent a donation with the message "Sir Thomas and his good sportsmanship are a lesson to every American."

In 1970, Royal Ulster Yacht Club awarded a substantial silver cup in Lipton's memory to the challenger of the America's Cup. This tradition continues today.

HRH The Duke of Gloucester is the Commodore of the Club.



Bangor's heart beats to the rhythm of the sea and coastline that surrounds it, with the vibrancy of the many creatives and businesses who work in it and is sustained by the pride, resourcefulness and energy of its many residents. In the words of one of its most famous sons, Snow Patrol's Gary Lightbody:

"I'll always come back to Bangor. It's my home and it's my heart...[LA is]...never going to outshine home"

Snow Patrol at Ward Park 3, Bangor, May 2019





Open House Music Festival

Open House originated in Belfast in 1999 but in 2013 its founders Alison Gordon and Kieran Gilmore chose to relocate it to Bangor – their hometown. They share their story and hopes for Bangor:

“Formerly known as The Brighton of Ireland, Bangor’s economy from the late Victorian era to the mid-20th century was built around tourism, entertainment, leisure and hospitality. When choosing to set up in Bangor, we firmly believed that it could once again become a thriving seaside town, with arts and cultural activity at the heart of its identity and economy.

Since 2013, the annual Open House Festival has grown steadily, with more than 60,000 people visiting festival events annually, and an economic impact in excess of £2M a year. We have an extensive volunteer programme, a community choir, and involve more than 150 local businesses in our Festival Friends scheme.

In December 2020 we took ownership of the former Court House on Bangor seafront - an iconic Victorian listed building - via Northern Ireland’s first ever Community Asset Transfer. The project is funded by a range of organisations including the National Lottery Heritage Fund and will see the building restored and transformed into a venue for arts and cultural events.

Bangor is the third largest town in Northern Ireland, with a rich history as a vibrant seaside town, and a burgeoning arts and creative community. If it can achieve city status it can firmly re-establish its identity as a key destination for cultural tourism, and a gateway to the rest of the Ards Peninsula. The opportunity to apply for UK City of Culture would bring a major boost to the town and support the huge gains that have been achieved here by local people in recent years.”





Bangor's Business Heart

While still featuring a number of high street names and small independent stores, like many town centres across the UK, Bangor's retail core has reduced in recent years and our business offering has moved in new directions. As referenced above there is a growing creative sector, working collaboratively to build the town's reputation for arts and culture.

A strong community is also growing around technology, with companies like Simply Nuc, a world-class provider of computer devices, and award-winning development company Eyekiller, choosing to have a base in Bangor because of the ready access to talent.

The town punches above its weight in manufacturing being home to several global manufacturing businesses. Perhaps most celebrated is Denroy, a multi award-winning company producing high-spec polymer components for the aerospace and automotive industries, as well as a range of haircare products under the iconic Denman brand. The company has been based in Bangor since the 1970s and was the first UK manufacturing company to receive an SC21 gold award, which recognises 99% quality and 99% delivery performance. Group CEO John Rainey recognises access to talent from the local area as being key to success but has also stressed how collaboration with other businesses operating out of the town inspires innovation. These businesses include Whale, who design, manufacture and market innovative pumps and water/ space heating systems, and 3M who manufacture and supply tapes, adhesives and filtration systems to dozens of diverse markets.

This collaborative spirit came to the fore during the COVID-19 pandemic when Denroy joined an innovative local collective to help produce vital face shields for the healthcare sector (Hero Shield). For a considerable period the companies were running the project at their own cost in order that their product could be made available free of charge. Building on this experience and with full credit to the ingenuity of the company's staff team, Denroy has since invested £3M in a new manufacturing facility in Bangor to produce PPE and secured a £19.5M contract with the Health Service. This has created over 130 local jobs.

With examples like these, it is not surprising that the town's attractiveness to potential investors is growing. Offering easy access to Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland, excellent digital and transport connectivity, a highly educated workforce and outstanding natural environment, Bangor is seeking to position itself as a prime location for inward investment. Progress on this is already being made with the multi-million pound private sector investments in Queen's Parade and the Flagship Centre.

The town has long been recognised as a popular events destination and the hospitality/ leisure sector is growing as a result. The wider Borough has the second highest tourism sector related employment in Northern Ireland. New home-grown business such as SupHub (Stand Up Paddle Boarding) are giving residents and visitors better access to the coastal waters around the town. The town enjoys several award-winning eateries. Food and drink from the town is exported to many countries. Of note, is Clandeboye Estate's range of 'hand crafted' yoghurts. These products have received multiple 'good taste awards' over successive years.

"Brookland Property bought the vacant Flagship Shopping Centre in Bangor in 2021. It is a decision that makes business sense for us but for me, as someone who was brought up in Bangor, it has a personal pull. I remember when the Flagship was a vibrant part of a thriving town. With the right investment and vision, I believe it can be that once again, complimenting other planned town centre developments and contributing to the exciting regeneration that is ongoing in Bangor at the present time."

Ricky McLarnon, Director, Brookland Property and owner of the Flagship [157,000 sq ft centre on Bangor's Main Street]



“Kilcooley Women’s Centre has for over 25 years been making a huge difference to the lives of women and children in Bangor through the range of support, training and advocacy services we offer. There are so many other brilliant charities and groups that we work closely with, and the thing we all have in common is that we could not function without the support of dedicated local volunteers who genuinely care about helping their neighbours and making Bangor a great place to live. Kilcooley Women’s Centre has recently secured new premises in Bangor’s town centre and I am delighted that we will be able to continue our work from such a central location that will serve the whole community.”

*Alison Blayney, BEM, Chief Executive,
Kilcooley Women’s Centre*

Bangor’s Caring Heart

Bangor is a welcoming and caring community with many organisations and individuals actively giving their time and energy to support projects that promote wellbeing and regeneration in the town.

This is well demonstrated by the grassroots Bangor Cares initiative – established in 2019 to highlight mental health concerns among our younger residents. More than 70 local organisations are involved and contributed to the first Bangor Cares week, which both raised awareness and provided practical help on this particularly challenging issue.

Offering more formal support, North Down Community Network has been working with local groups on a range of capacity building issues including community development, building social capital, lobbying, good governance and best practice sharing since 1999.

In October 2021, the Network opened a new Wellbeing Centre on Bangor’s Main Street, providing a vibrant and welcoming space for residents. Facilities include signposting services to mental health support, delivering well-being programmes and sessions, an IT suite and workshop space.

Kilcooley Women’s Centre is a further group providing a diverse and innovative range of services to meet the identified needs of local women, children and their families. The centre has a particular focus on early intervention programmes and projects to address educational underachievement and poor health and wellbeing outcomes. The Centre was the recipient of a ‘Queens Award for Voluntary Service’ in 2017. During the Royal visit to Northern Ireland in 2021, the Duchess of Cornwall visited the Centre to meet staff and participants of the Camilla Book Club. The charity has recently purchased premises in Bangor town centre from which to operate a new community social enterprise project.

Bangor’s community spirit came to the fore during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many selfless people rallied around to support their family, friends and neighbours. Charities, community groups and local food banks were busier. Businesses evolved, with many Bangor based family-run shops offering delivery services, often going the extra mile to ensure their ‘shielding’ customers had everything they needed without having to put themselves at increased risk.



Bangor's Civic Heart

There is a great civic pride in Bangor, and to be awarded city status by Her Majesty The Queen would be considered a huge honour across the local community.

Civic occasions feature heavily in the town's events calendar from marking formal state occasions such as Remembrance Day, to celebrating local heroes and sporting achievements. The Council recognises those who make an exceptional contribution to the life of the community through the annual Civic Awards, with categories for Community and Good Neighbour excellence.

In 2018 the Council added Health and Social Care staff to its prestigious list of 'Freemen of the Borough'. This highest civic honour was awarded in appreciation of the exceptional contribution these men and woman make to the health and wellbeing of the local community. Ards and North Down was the first council in Northern Ireland to recognise health in this way and very fittingly the award coincided with the 70th anniversary of the NHS.

The Council plans to bestow the Freedom on the Irish Guards in 2022 in recognition of the outstanding service, dedication and courage of the Regiment. Gary Lightbody, who was born and raised in Bangor, is also due to receive this honour in recognition of his inspirational song writing and his significant charitable work.

Bangor is the third largest town in Northern Ireland. In administrative terms it falls under Ards and North Down Borough Council at a local level, and at a national and regional level within the North Down constituency, which is served by 5 Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) and one Member of Parliament (MP).

Bangor is within the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust. The town has its own Community Hospital and is only 9 miles from the larger Ulster Hospital. It falls within the Police Service of Northern Ireland's Ards and North Down District, which, in addition to a local policing team, has a Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) that is made up of councillors and local people who aim to ensure policing priorities in the area genuinely reflect local issues and concerns.

There is recognition across these administrative systems that they are 'stronger together' and we have a particularly active Community Planning Partnership that is working to define and deliver high level positive outcomes for the area. As well as creating the Community Plan (2017-2030), the Partners have established a 'Support Hub' to make sure vulnerable people are guided to the most appropriate support services. Using an integrated care model, they are looking at ways to improve access to health services within Bangor. An Age Friendly Alliance has also been established, which is working to ensure that Bangor is a great place for people to live and grow older in. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this collaborative approach between the Council, health, education and community partners lead to support structures for vulnerable people being established within days, meaning that no one fell through the gaps.

Progressive cities are those where residents have a voice and the Council started the 'Big Conversation' in 2015 as a mechanism for residents to tell decision makers about issues affecting them and their ideas on how these should be fixed. The information provided has led to an increased focus on support for those affected by poor mental health, especially among younger age groups. Ongoing conversations are taking place around regeneration, borough infrastructure and environmental issues.

The Council particularly wants young people to have a platform to influence public decisions so operates a Youth Forum – Youth Voice – which enables them to engage with key decision-makers and have their say.

"The award of the Freedom of Ards and North Down was a very special occasion for all the staff in the South Eastern Trust – including doctors, nurses, porters, support staff, domestics and those who work in the community we serve. It was a wonderful way for the Council to recognise the commitment and dedication of our staff.

It is the highest honour a Council can bestow and it means so much that the Trust has been recognised in this way."

Roisin Coulter, Chief Executive, SEHSCT

Bangor is currently positioning itself to secure dual investments totalling over £124M, that will enable the town to embark on its most ambitious regeneration journey for many years.

Wayne Hemingway, the founder of Red or Dead, is involved in both developments and is optimistic about the future of the town.

"Bangor has an amazing stretch of waterfront and some really well thought out plans that, over the next few years, will give it the opportunity to capitalise on its natural, historical and cultural assets. It will become a town that embraces the UK's new found love of its coastline. Bangor has a unique opportunity to reinvent itself as a forward thinking coastal resort and city status would be a tremendous fillip to it."





BANGOR'S HOPE CLAIM

Bangor Waterfront

The Council is progressing ambitious plans to redevelop Bangor's beautiful seafront with a necklace of new, sustainable, tourism and leisure attractions. The development is due to receive circa £40M of funding from Belfast Region City Deal, a bespoke package of funding from the UK Government, with the remaining investment coming from both the Council (approximately £20M) and the private sector (approximately £14M).

In securing and investing this money, the Council's ultimate aim is to help deliver on a vision for Bangor agreed by local stakeholders in 2018 – to make Bangor a 'destination of choice' to live, work, study and invest in.

The development will showcase a 2 mile stretch of Bangor's coastline and stunning sea views by enhancing the town's public realm in a sympathetic and sustainable way. Bangor's 5-star Marina will be redesigned to increase the number of seafaring visitors and to open the space, making it easier for everyone to enjoy. Pickie Fun Park, one of Northern Ireland's top ten attractions, will be developed to include new all-weather attractions. Watersport facilities at Ballyholme Yacht Club will be redeveloped to create a waterfront park to rival the best in Europe. It will enable Bangor to host international events. Finally, in recognition of Bangor's creative heart, the plans include proposals for a Music Hub with event and performance spaces.

Queen's Parade

Queen's Parade, a private sector investment being delivered in partnership with the Council, will complement and enhance the Bangor Waterfront plans. Bangor Marine Ltd (a partnership between Karl Group and Farrans) plan to invest £50M in a mixed-use development in the Queen's Parade area of Bangor's town centre. This area runs parallel to the Marina and waterfront. The proposed scheme will see extensive improvements including new homes, a hotel, offices, events space and cafés/restaurants.

"Bangor is already a great town with a huge amount to offer both residents and visitors, but with investment in the right areas it will simply become one of the country's best places to live, work and have fun. It's the regeneration potential that brought us to Bangor in the first place and we are thrilled to have the opportunity to be part of making it happen. Our mission is to 'Create places that enhance the lives of People' and we are certain we can do that in Bangor."

Aran Blackbourne, Bangor Marine Limited

▶ [Bangor By The Sea video](#)



Bangor's Sustainable Future

Ards and North Down has for many years led the way in Northern Ireland on waste management and other environmental issues. We were the first local council to declare a climate emergency and have developed a Roadmap for Sustainability to help us deliver on the issues. We recognise that achieving the balance between environmental, economic and social sustainability is critical to the future of both our area and the wider world.

Residents and businesses in Bangor have shown great commitment to these ideals. The Council has recently supported 25 local hospitality businesses to undertake a green health check. This highlighted what each business was doing well but also what could be improved. Businesses were also assisted to create their green story, allowing them, many for the first time, to promote their sustainable credentials to partners and visitors.

Bangor's hospitality businesses were very active in a 2019 trial to offer customers compostable packaging and reduce single-use plastics. 50 businesses were involved and 90% of participants said they had benefitted from the trial and would continue to investigate compostable options.

Bangor is home to Citizen Sea, NI's first boat based environmental charity. The Council has supported the group via funding from the Recycling Community Investment Fund – a unique funding pot created from the monetary savings achieved by diverting food from landfill. This funding has been used to develop a package of unique initiatives aimed at proactively protecting and enhancing our natural environment, whilst addressing all three pillars of sustainability. Examples of projects include Sea Bins, to remove single use plastics from our coastal waters, based in Bangor Marina; a participatory budgeting project in all five towns in the Borough including Bangor and the CLEAR school environmental education project.

The Council itself is also championing sustainability with a range of initiatives including solar powered bin lorries, rewilding schemes and electrification of equipment.

Bangor's 5 Gold Anchor accredited Marina will soon be welcoming a new zero-emission high-speed ferry as part of the Belfast Maritime Consortium. The Consortium brings together 13 partners from across industry, academia and local authorities, funded by UKRI in one of its largest awards, to collaborate on the development and launch of the world's most advanced high-speed zero-emission passenger ferry, and to develop the technical and operational requirements for a maritime transport system of the future.

The project will not only create new commercial opportunities, but also help tackle major environmental challenges and promote new sustainable travel opportunities in line with government policy, which calls for all new vessels to be designed with zero-emissions capable technologies by 2025.





Bangor – A Future City

In 2016 Colin Davidson's painting of Her Majesty The Queen was unveiled at a Co-Operation Ireland reception in London attended by the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh. The celebrated Bangor artist was very aware of the gravity and the responsibility involved in the honour of painting the monarch. People in Bangor are very proud of this further unique and special connection between the town and Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth.

"For over 20 years Bangor has been my home. As an artist, I find it's coastline endlessly inspiring and uplifting. It connects me with my place in the world. When you listen, it has so many ancient stories to tell. I remember clearly, sitting painting The Queen in the yellow drawing room of Buckingham Palace, talking about home. Talking about Bangor."

Colin Davidson



"I give my whole hearted endorsement for the bid for Bangor to be awarded City Status. From my first visit – as a small boy on a Sunday School outing – Bangor has always held a mythical status for me. With its own beach, castle and Abbey and a history stretching back to the mists of time, Bangor has always had a unique cultural role in this province.

Bangor should be awarded City Status in recognition of its rich cultural heritage and creative heart, shaped by its coastal location especially in conjunction with its exciting redevelopment plans. I very much hope that this bid is successful."

Gawn Rowan Hamilton
HM Lord-Lieutenant of County Down

"I am proud to endorse Bangor's bid to become a city. Receiving this civic honour in Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee year would be a huge boost to the town and the wider community. If City Status was granted it would recognise Bangor's growing stature as a place to live, work and visit; it would demonstrate support for the creativity, vibrancy and ambition of the community; and it would restore the title we enjoyed in Medieval times and still hold in our hearts today. We believe our bid is strong and welcome this opportunity to compete to become a great city once again."

Mayor of Ards and North Down
Councillor Mark Brooks



A GREAT PLACE

Bangor is a historic, vibrant and culturally rich town situated in County Down on the the east coast of Northern Ireland.

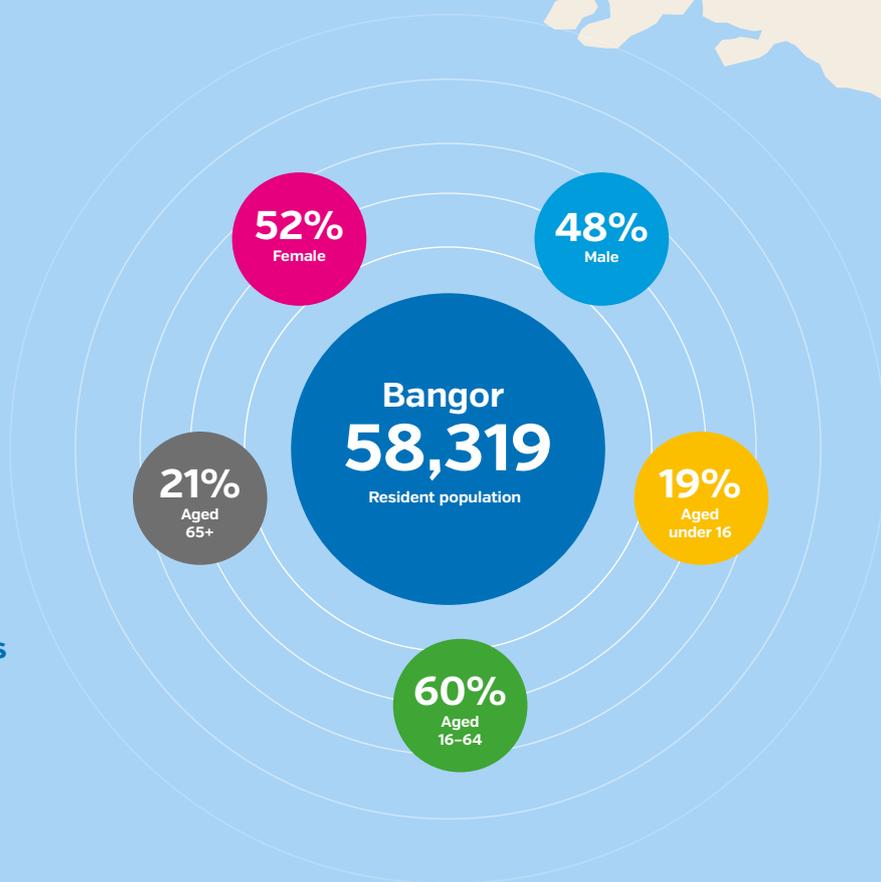
It has previously been named the most desirable place to live in Northern Ireland and is easily accessed by train, bus and car, with George Best Belfast City Airport only ten miles away.

The town is wrapped around its award-winning Marina. As evidenced throughout this document, it offers superb amenities and infrastructure, high performing schools (14 primary, 2 secondary, 2 grammar and a special school), and excellent transport links and connectivity. A range of housing options is available from affordable to exclusive (£60k to over £1M). As is detailed later, there are many leisure amenities and shopping/dining offerings. An efficient, transparent and accountable system of governance is in place, with an ambitious local Council that works to support and improve the lives of the community and the environment.



Bangor: Key Stats

- 94.5% resident satisfaction with Bangor as a place to live
- 700,000 annual visitors to Bangor
- No 1 in Northern Ireland for NGA digital infrastructure
- 2019 Winner of Ireland's 'Best Kept Large Urban Centre' [Best Kept Town Awards]
- 16,000 active community volunteers
- Site of Northern Ireland's leading further education college



A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE

Wellbeing

The fresh sea air and abundance of open spaces make Bangor a place that promotes a sense of wellbeing and 'good living'. Data taken from the Health Deprivation and Disability Domain, and also from the 2011 census, indicates that people living in Bangor are in better physical and mental health than the Northern Ireland average. While life expectancy figures for Bangor specifically are not available, the life expectancy in the Ards and North Down area is 79.5 for males and 82.9 for females (Northern Ireland average is 78.8 males and 82.6 females).

Education and skills

Labour market and socio-economic indicators from the 2011 census show that people living in Bangor have higher qualifications and are more likely to be in employment, and in management or senior positions, than the Northern Ireland average. Higher proportions of school leavers in Bangor (82%) achieved at least 5 GCSEs grade A*- C including GCSE Maths and GCSE English, compared to the Northern Ireland average (76%). Across the Ards and North Down Borough, the employment rate (73.1%) is higher than the Northern Ireland average (71.9%).

Community action

Bangor has an active and broad-based voluntary sector covering areas such as assisting people in crisis, the vulnerable, those with disabilities and young people; protecting and enhancing our environment; supporting people to take part in sport or creative activities; and, of particular importance in a Northern Ireland context, community groups that promote community cohesion and work tirelessly to better the lives of residents in their areas.

Council support

The Council recognises the critical role the voluntary sector plays in enriching our society and offers a wide range of support, with an entire directorate dedicated to 'Community and Wellbeing'. The overarching plan to which the Council works, the Community Plan, states the ambition "to have empowered, resilient individuals and communities, to reduce inequalities; to promote good relations and sustainability; and to improve the accessibility of all public services."

Several key Council service areas work specifically to support the voluntary sector. These include:

- The Community Development service, which delivers grant funding, youth programmes, training, support and advice services. In the current financial year, through its community development work, the Council has distributed over £600,000 of funding to groups in Bangor. This has included approximately £360,000 to Bangor based Community Advice Ards and North Down.
- The Externally Funded Programmes unit is responsible for several programmes funded through the European Union, Central Government and/or external bodies. These include the Council's Good Relations Programme, the PEACE IV Programme (designed to support peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland) and the Policing and Community Safety (PCSP) Partnership. The annual value of the programmes is approximately £1M.
- The Arts and Heritage service manages North Down Museum in Bangor town centre, which attracts 75,000 visitors annually. The team deliver outreach activities, funding for individuals/groups and a popular range of professional development opportunities for artists resident in the Borough. They also develop information and publications on the cultural heritage of the town. An estimated £370k of Council funding goes towards supporting cultural activities in Bangor on an annual basis.

- The Sport Development service delivers sports, recreation, and health and wellbeing programmes, as well as providing advice and funding support to local sports clubs and sports people. Grants of up to £5,000 are made available for capital expenditure and grants of up to £250 for assistance with training or events attendance. Over £260k is invested annually by the Council into Bangor's sports clubs and facilities.

Other Council teams work with volunteers in the community to promote a clean, green, healthy, safe and sustainable environment. This includes distributing small grants through the Live Here Love Here initiative, funded by the Recycling Community Investment Fund, to community groups for environmental projects such as sea bins, beach cleans ups, campaigns and much more. Almost £300,000 has been invested in Bangor through this scheme since 2017.

The Council's Parks service works closely with local volunteers to ensure there are flowerbeds, planters and well-maintained green spaces for everyone to enjoy throughout the town. The Council provides financial assistance (up to £1,000 per group each year) and practical support. Two parks in Bangor – Linear Park and Castle Park – retained their Green Flag awards in 2021. These awards are an internationally recognised certification for parks and open spaces, with 'community involvement' one of the categories considered during the rigorous judging process.

The Council also runs an annual 'In Bloom' competition, which encourages everyone who lives or works in Bangor to think about how they can enhance the local environment. The number of applications to the competition is growing year on year.

The Council administers Tourism Events Grants of approximately £80,000 per year. Events supported in Bangor this year included the free summer concerts held every week in Ward Park, and also the UK's Strongest Man and Women competitions.

The Council also provided financial assistance to Clandeboye Golf Club for the PGA Europro Northern Ireland Masters Golf Tournament in August 2021. Every year the Council funds Open House, a non-profit charitable organisation, to run the Open House and Seaside Revival festivals in Bangor (£75,000 grant). Council also provides the events sector with non-financial support and assistance. The Council, working in conjunction with the South Eastern Regional College (SERC), has developed a training course on event management that aims to encourage more volunteers to become involved in organising community events. Council has also partnered with SERC on the 'Town Ambassadors' programme. Ambassadors are selected from the Foundation Degree in Hospitality, Tourism and Events, and they are offered the opportunity to work at events in the town in order to develop their skills.

Due to our good working relationships, when the COVID pandemic hit in 2020 Council Officers were able to engage with key partners – YMCA, AGEnda, North Down Community Network, Bangor Alternatives – to quickly set up support structures so that no vulnerable people fell through the gaps.

During the first lockdown, with our partners, we delivered:

- over 16,000 food parcels
- over 10,000 phone calls and doorstep visits
- over 400 laptops, tablets and internet connection packages for home schooling

A GREAT PLACE TO WORK AND INVEST

There are many reasons why businesses choose to set up and stay in Bangor. These include:

- **Excellent connectivity and global reach**

Ards and North Down is the number 1 council area in Northern Ireland for:

- % premises with NGA (Next Generation Access) digital infrastructure (Connected Nations 2020 - Ofcom)
- Full Fibre availability to premises, and 4th in the whole of the UK.

Bangor, the largest town in the Borough, offers a comprehensive infrastructure of road/rail links to nearby air and sea ports for excellent global reach.

- **High skills and low operating costs**

Combining a skilled and highly educated local workforce with competitive operating costs makes Bangor a highly appealing place to invest.

- **Strong appeal to attract and retain talent**

Bangor offers an ideal work/life balance location for employees with outstanding quality of life, a stunning coastline and beautiful landscape.

- **A proven location for success on a global scale**

Bangor (and the wider Borough) is home to a concentration of leading companies across a diverse range of industries including Creative and Digital Technology, Advanced Manufacturing and Tourism and Hospitality competing globally on cost, quality and on-time delivery. The region's diverse business base is made up of global leaders; locally grown international businesses; recent start-ups with key contracts in the UK and Europe; and fast-growing technology companies.

At present there are 1,505 VAT and/or PAYE Registered Businesses operating in the Bangor area.

According to the 2021 Community and Remote Working Report, approximately 80% of local jobs are filled by local people. The remaining 20% are filled by workers travelling from Belfast, Lisburn and Newtownabbey.

The McKee Clock

The £124M of regeneration investment planned for Bangor will offer many commercial and job opportunities, as well as creating innovative town centre office space. As a result the number of Bangor businesses/jobs can be expected to grow exponentially in the coming years.

The key sectors operating in Bangor include:

- **Creative and Digital**

Bangor’s combination of talent and beautiful environment is helping creative/ digital businesses flourish. Bangor is home to a growing cluster of creative digital businesses including local start-ups and award-winning subsidiaries of multi-nationals.

- **Hospitality and Leisure**

Ards and North Down attracts 6% of all overnight trips to NI. Bangor plays a major role in this given its proximity to Belfast, transport infrastructure, 4 hotels and many guesthouses.

- **Business and Professional Services**

Highly educated talent, low staff turnover, superior broadband and competitive operating costs combine to make Bangor a popular and successful location for Business and Professional Services firms.

- **Advanced Manufacturing and Aerospace**

Bangor hosts international and locally owned world-leading companies, such as Denroy and Whale, operating in advanced plastics and engineering and providing the highest quality product to demanding customers worldwide.

The Council’s recently developed ‘Blue: Green, Creatively Connected’ Integrated Strategy, sets out a confident and ambitious plan to build a sustainable and prosperous economy in Bangor and Ards and North Down. The Strategy’s key focus is on growth, investment and regeneration and sets out exciting plans to support our economic development and tourism potential.

Many businesses across Bangor have received industry awards, many multiple times. Below is a sample of just some of the types of awards in different industries that our businesses have received:

Clandeboyne Lodge Hotel was awarded the Travellers’ Choice Award by Tripadvisor, earning a spot amongst the top 10% of hotels worldwide [2021]

Denroy, the world’s leading innovator in the design and manufacture of engineered polymer components and solutions, received SC21 Gold Standard for the 3rd consecutive year and was recognised as a UK Business Hero 2020 by the Chamber of Commerce for their work to provide the Hero Shield

EyeKiller, a digital agency, won Best Agency of the Year and the Ecommerce Project of the Year at the Digital Awards NI [2019]

GP McManus, a joinery and building company, was winner of the Federation of Master Builders Commercial or Public Sector Project category [2021]

Momentum Group, a financial services company, was the Employer of the Year at the FSB Celebrating Business Awards 2019

Send My Bag, a luggage delivery business, received a Queen’s Award for Enterprise [2018]

Simply NUC, a technology company, won the Intel US Partner of the Year Award [2020]

Tyson Wilson, Recruitment Consultancy, won the Business Women of the Year Award at the FSB Celebrating Business Awards 2019.



Bangor Abbey

A GREAT PLACE TO VISIT AND EXPLORE

Cultural Experiences

Bangor offers cultural experiences to suit all ages and interests and comes alive with vibrant festivals, concerts, and family-friendly events. The annual Open House and Sea Bangor festivals celebrate local maritime heritage, food, drink, craft and music, and attract locals and visitors in high numbers. The Council runs a year-long programme of events and celebrates many special civic occasions. In 2022 we will mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee with plans currently under development to run a wide range of themed events, including concerts and street parties.

There are many heritage attractions throughout the town. Visitors can walk in the footsteps of monks and Saints by following the 5km Christian Heritage trail and see some of the area's most important Christian Heritage sites including North Down Museum and Bangor Abbey. The route takes in the beauty of the Coastal Path and Bangor Castle Walled Garden.

Ards and North Down played a role in both World Wars, from preparations for the D-Day landing to POW camps to Air Force airstrips. Many of these sites are open to the public and a Great Wars Trail has been developed. In Bangor it includes relics such as a public air raid shelter, a Second World War pill box, and a gun from a World War 1 German U-Boat. The Somme Museum, which is located on the edge of Bangor at Whitespots Country Park. The Museum is fully accredited with an extensive collection. It provides information on Ireland's contribution to the First World War, in particular the Battle of the Somme.

Central to the Great Wars Trail is the Eisenhower Pier at Bangor Marina. The Pier was so named to recognise the significance of Supreme Commander Dwight D Eisenhower's visit to Bangor in 1944 during which he gave a motivational speech to the troops shortly before they headed towards Normandy for D-Day. The Pier is also home to a colony of black guillemots who annually nest in the harbour wall. These are known affectionately as 'Bangor Penguins'.

Bangor is twinned with Bregenz in Austria and is a Sister City to Virginia Beach in America.

Creativity

The creativity of Bangor's people, from earliest times to present day musicians and producers, is a key part of the town's DNA. Bangor is renowned for high quality craft and artisan makers offering unique products. Project 24's art pods on Bangor Seafront allow visitors to watch the artists in action, and to purchase local goods.

A wide range of music events take place in the town, from small intimate gigs in local bars, to seasonal events, to major concerts held in the town centre's Ward Park. Independent charity, Open House, has ambitious plans to regenerate the former Bangor Court House and turn it into a multi-purpose venue serving the town. The proposals will see the creation of performance spaces and creative workspaces that will help to ensure the ongoing sustainability of the venue.

The Great Outdoors

Ballyholme beach is a mile-long crescent of sand curving along the bay. A favourite sea bathing spot for generations, the beach is used all year round by families, sea swimmers and windsurfers. The Edwardian terrace houses provide a backdrop for walks along the promenade towards Ballymacormick Point, a rocky outcrop enjoyed for walking and bird spotting.

Ward Park is a unique town centre park covering 37 acres with small lakes, a wildfowl sanctuary, sports facilities and a War Memorial. An ideal spot to enjoy the local wildlife and feed the ducks, among Ward Park's attractions are a children's playground, bowling greens and tennis courts. Free live music events take place weekly at the Bandstand in July and August. A Park Run is held in Ward Park every Saturday throughout the year.

Castle Park is the perfect place for a woodland stroll and home to Bangor Castle, which has formal gardens and an Arboretum. Following the pathways through Castle Park brings you to the award-winning Bangor Castle Walled Garden. The garden is divided into four different sections, each with its own horticultural personality. The garden was restored and reopened by the Council as a visitor attraction in 2009, and in that year it won the Royal Horticultural Society Award for Permanent Landscaping.

The North Down Coastal Path is one of the finest shore-line walks in Ireland. It features a number of differing habitats from rocky shores through salt marshes and mud flats to sandy beaches. It is sometimes possible to see grey or Atlantic seals from the path.

Crawfordsburn Country Park offers tranquil walks through peaceful meadows and wooded glens, a stunning waterfall and two beaches. It is one of the most visited parks in Northern Ireland.

Whitespots Country Park and Leadmines, which form part of the Columban Way Heritage Trail, are situated on the edge of Bangor and adjoin Clandeboye Estate. This site has been designated as an Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) due to its history of lead mining, the Clandeboye Estate being the home of the 36th (Ulster Division) training camp, and the Somme Museum at the gateway to the site. Ards and North Down Borough Council is developing plans to enhance the site with a vision to: *"Create a unique open landscape with a fully accessible 'Trails Experience' of national significance. Creating a seamless link for the visitor to the proposed Greenways Network and Cairn Wood and acting as a gateway to Strangford Lough and the Ards Peninsula."*

The Council is progressing plans for a connected network of Greenways across the Borough. This will see the construction of new routes as well as the extension or enhancement of existing routes, including the stretch of the North Down Coastal Path that passes through Bangor. The network will provide free recreational opportunities for all ages and abilities, encourage healthier lifestyles, bolster local economic development, reduce car trips and carbon footprints, provide additional transportation options, and encourage better environmental stewardship. The Council has recently secured approximately £3.2M 'Levelling Up' funding from the UK Government towards the Greenways project, and it is awaiting the outcome of a further funding application, with the remainder of the cost to be met by Council.

Sports and leisure

Pickie Fun Park is one of Northern Ireland's top ten most popular visitor attractions. Visitors can enjoy the Pickie Puffer steam train, giant Pickie pedal swans and an 18-hole nautical themed mini golf course.

Bangor Marina is Northern Ireland's largest and most prestigious award-winning marina with Blue Flag status. A redesign of the Marina forms part of the Council's plans for the Bangor Waterfront redevelopment, with proposals including additional public access and the opportunity for new cafés and restaurants.

Bangor is home to two yacht clubs – Royal Ulster Yacht Club, which has a long history of cruising and yacht racing, and Ballyholme Yacht Club (BYC). The latter has hosted many prestigious sailing events including Ballyholme Regatta, the World Police and Fire Games, F18 Catamaran World Championships, Irish Laser National Championships and the RYANI Youth Championships. Club members have participated in many international events, including Olympian sailors Ryan Seaton and Matt McGovern in the 49er, and James Espey in the Laser dinghy. The proposals for Bangor Waterfront include further developing BYC as a world class facility for water sports.

Bangor has 3 golf clubs. Clondeboye Golf Club boasts two courses in a demanding wooded environment of gorse. Bangor Golf Club provides a beautiful parkland course close to the town centre. Carnalea Golf Club is situated in a spectacular setting overlooking Belfast Lough, with views of the Antrim Hills and on a clear day Scotland.

Situated in the heart of Bangor, the £38M Aurora Aquatic and Leisure Complex was opened by HRH The Princess Royal in 2013 as a new flagship leisure complex and Northern Ireland's first 50m Swimming Pool and Elite Diving Centre. Attracting 1 million visitors per year, the Aurora Complex boasts some highly sophisticated sustainable design features. The centre houses Northern Ireland's only 50m ten-lane FINA international standard pool with seating for a thousand spectators. A separate leisure water facility has a wave machine, water slides, flumes, bubble pools and interactive water play features, designed for families.

Other sports available at the centre include squash, hockey, football, Gaelic sports and a 120-station fitness suite. The complex includes a performance development centre for elite athletes.

Other Council owned leisure and recreational facilities in Bangor include free tennis courts, 17 playparks and 5 community centres that are available to the public to hire. There is also a strong private sector offering, including gyms, an inflatable park, and Eddie Irvine Sports, one of Northern Ireland's premier indoor sporting facilities offering a wide range of activities including kart racing, laser combat and football. Bangor is also home to the largest cycling club in Northern Ireland. Bangor's Omniplex cinema underwent a £3.2M upgrade in 2020 and reopened as Northern Ireland's first D'LUXX recline cinema.

Shopping

Bangor offers a range of independent and multi-national shops and supermarkets in both its town centre and out of town shopping/retail parks, along with a weekly 100-year old market that offers a wide selection of the freshest fruit and vegetables, fish, home-baked goods and seasonal plants. The largest centre for shopping is Bloomfield Shopping Centre, which has over 50 retailers split between a covered mall and retail warehouse units. Anchor tenants include Next, Marks and Spencer, TK Maxx, and Tesco. There are three other retail parks in Bangor based in the Balloo, Clondeboye and the Springhill areas of the town. Balloo and Clondeboye host a considerable number of retail units, with multi-national tenants including Sainsburys, Halfords, Home Bargains, Currys and Homebase to name just a few, along with many local SMEs, trade centres, mechanics, gyms, hairdressers, coffee shops, restaurants and much more. Springhill Retail Park, built in 2008, boasts 16 retail units plus doctor and dental surgeries and a pharmacy.

Great food and drink hub

Northern Ireland was named the 'World's Best Food Destination' by the International Travel and Tourism Awards in 2018. Ards and North Down boasts more award-winning eateries than any other region outside of Belfast.

Bangor features heavily on that list with award-

winning bakeries and takeaways and the best Indian restaurant in Northern Ireland (Bokhara) recognised at the National Curry Awards.

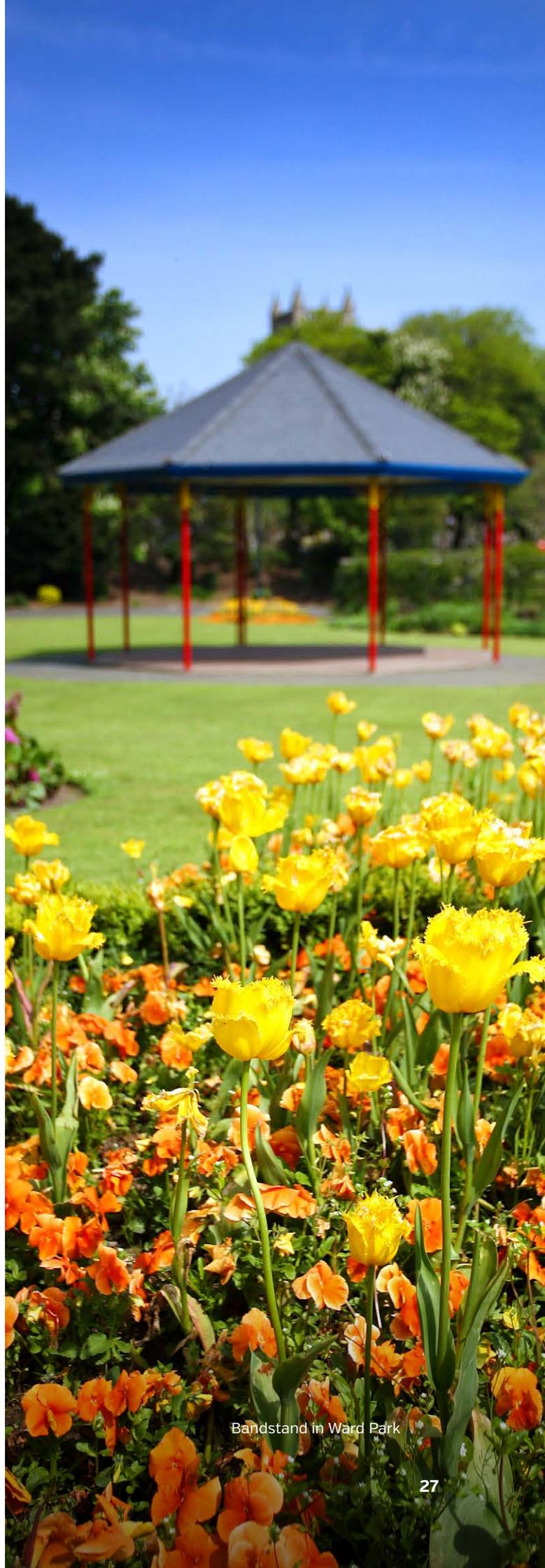
As a seaside town, Bangor is well known for award winning Fish 'n' Chips and finest locally made ice-cream. Barry's famous Lemon Top ice cream is a refreshing zesty treat that has been enjoyed by visitors for decades.

The region is well known for high quality local produce. Bangor-based Clandeboye Estate's hand-crafted yoghurts are made with the milk from its pedigree herds of Holstein and Jersey cows. The milk is taken fresh each morning, then processed and incubated slowly overnight to produce a rich and creamy natural yoghurt which has been awarded 5 Great Taste Awards and a UK Quality Food Award in 2021.

Bangor's fine dining eateries such as The Boathouse and Cafe Essence showcase unique produce from the local area including finest seafood fresh from Strangford Lough, flavoursome grass-fed beef and local Comber early potatoes (PGI status) fresh from rich farmland that surrounds the town.

The town is well known for its vibrant night-time economy, with a host of restaurants, bars and clubs in the town's High Street area. Many of the bars feature live music sessions showcasing local talent.

Supporting the next generation of chefs, the Bangor campus of South Eastern Regional College is well renowned for its superb hospitality and catering courses. The lecturers are winners of the Times Education Supplement (TES) FE Award 2021 for 'WorldSkills Hero' in recognition of their commitment to giving students the opportunity to raise their technical standards and improve their soft skills set by competing in internal, regional, and international competitions. Lecturers and students regularly support the Council's event programme, delivering food demonstrations using the best of local produce.



Bandstand in Ward Park



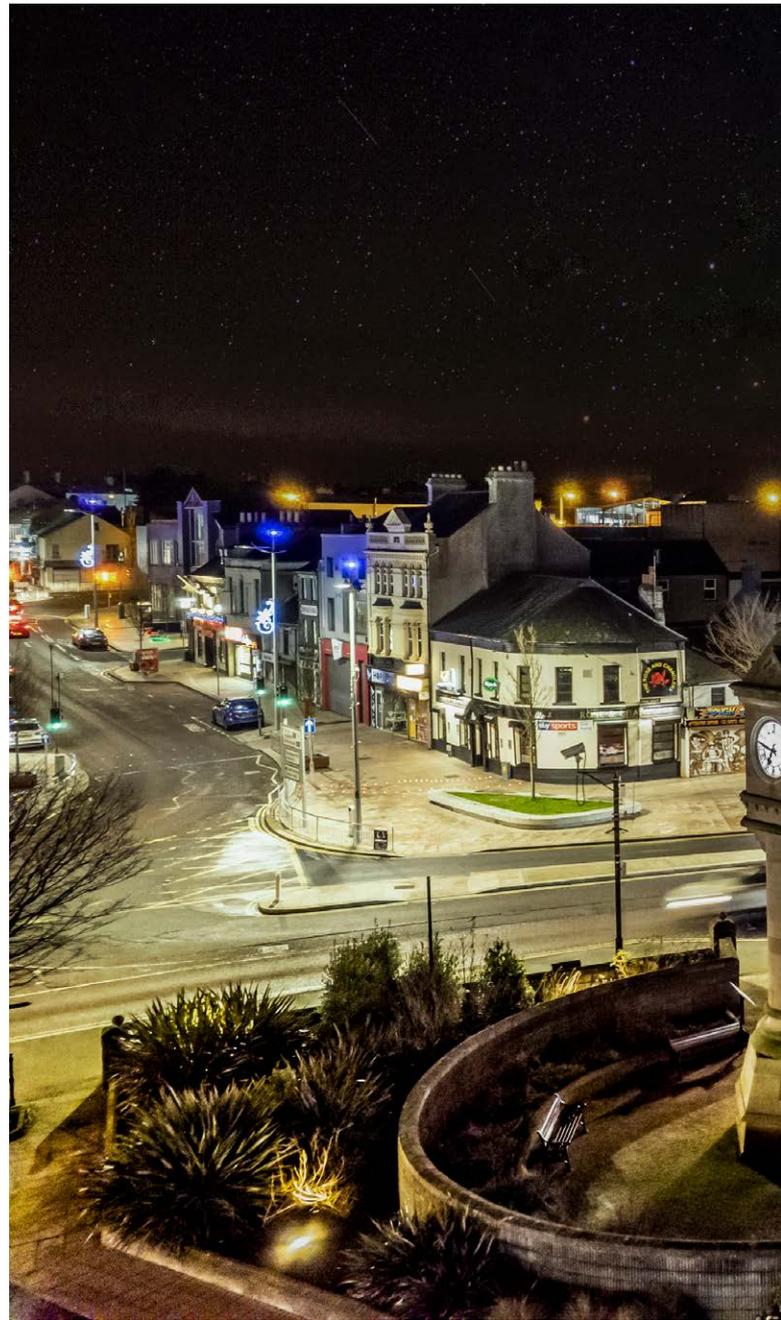
Bangor's former **Court House**, an iconic Victorian listed building, will soon be transformed into a venue for arts and cultural events.



Boat House
A fine dining restaurant in the former Harbour Master's Office at Bangor Marina. The building dates back to 1849.



Tower House
Built by major landowner James Hamilton in 1637 as a Custom House, the architecture of the Tower is unique in Bangor and rare across Northern Ireland.



With a collection of independent retailers, **High Street** offers speciality shopping in the town centre. It is also the hub for much of Bangor's night life.



Main Street
hospitality
My Street

Main Street and High Street traverse Bangor and converge at the McKee Clock, which is the main focal point in the waterfront and centre of the town. Many of Bangor's key attractions are located in and around this area, as shown on the map (pg 48/49), making it very much the heart of the town.



Street is home to a number of national retail and service chains. Many are part of the 'Main Street, High Street' promotional collective.



Bangor Marina is the second largest marina in Ireland, with over 550 berths. It is within the Irish Sea cruising routes and attracts visitors from around the world.



Bangor Abbey

St Comgall founded the Abbey in 558AD and it grew to become one of the most important seats of learning in Europe. Today it is a vibrant worshipping community, with an excellent choral heritage, in the centre of Bangor.



Malachy's Wall

The visible remains of the monastic site of Bangor Abbey; dating back to the thirteenth century and built on the site of the original 6th century Abbey. Restoration works were undertaken by the Council in 2006.



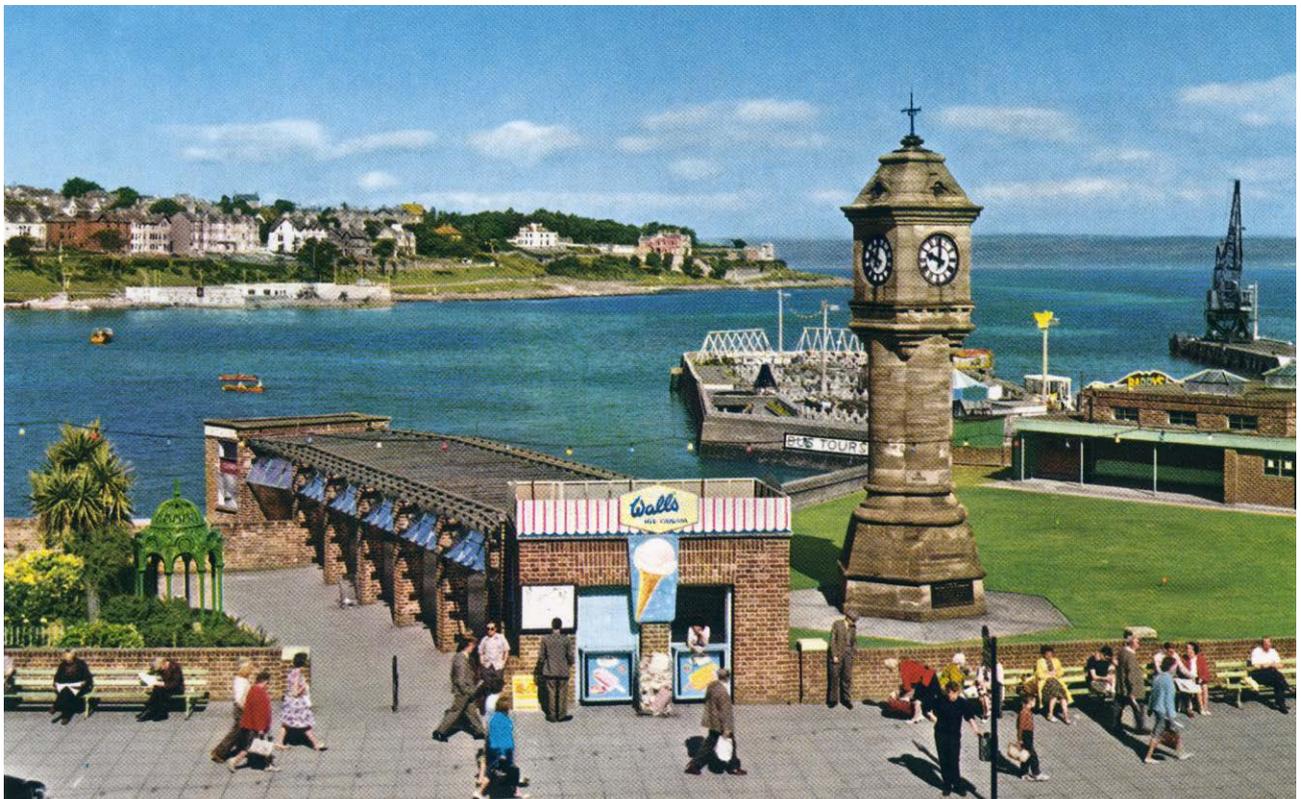
Bangor Bell Art Trail

The first stop on an interpretive art trail through Bangor that tells the story of St Columbanus.



The Monk's Cell

This life-size reconstruction of an Irish monk's cell is in the courtyard at North Down Museum.



The Brighton of Ireland

In its heyday during the 50s and 60s Bangor was the destination of choice for people across Ireland looking for a seaside holiday destination. A popular attraction for children and adults was Barry's amusements but the town's beautiful beaches and coastal path were the main draw – and remain so today.



Bangor Castle

Bangor Castle, now the main civic centre for Ards and North Down Borough Council, has been built three times, the third time, which is its current form, being in 1852 for the Hon Robert Edward Ward and his family. The Castle is situated within 129 acres of parkland in the centre of town [Castle Park].



The North Pier

The wooden pier around 1905 with a small bandstand at the end. The Long Hole harbour is just behind this and there are a several boats in the water. The square towers of the Royal Ulster Yacht Club can be seen in the background.



Royal Ulster Yacht Club

The Bangor-based Club was given the title of 'Royal Ulster' in 1869 by Queen Victoria, just four years after being established. The Clubhouse is one of the finest examples of Edwardian building in Ireland. The Queen visited the Club on both of her visits to Bangor.



1961: The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh visit Bangor

This is the most celebrated of all Royal visits. Enthusiastic welcoming took place on the pier and in the town. The Royal couple visited Bangor Castle and then the Queen had lunch at the Royal Ulster Yacht Club whilst the Duke raced in the Regatta.



Bangor Castle Walled Garden

Designed by the Ward Family in the 1840s, this garden was always closed to the public. The Council restored the 1.5 acre site and opened it as an attraction in April 2009. The garden is award winning as a visitor attraction and for horticultural excellence. It is one of the most popular open spaces in Bangor.



Eisenhower Pier

Renamed in 2005, in a ceremony led by General Eisenhower's granddaughter, in recognition of the significance of the General's address and the role of Bangor in the D-Day landings.



Barry Bingham, who was born at Bangor Castle in 1881, had the distinction of being the only member of the Royal Navy to be awarded the Victoria Cross while in captivity during World War One. He was awarded the coveted decoration for the extremely gallant manner in which he led his destroyer division in their attack as part of the Battle of Jutland.



The former Town Hall in Bangor town centre. This Grade B1 listed building is soon to be transformed into a social/creative hub in a further example of regeneration in the town. Pictured during Civic Week 1951.



Post Office plaque

Bronze plaque on the front wall of the Post Office in Main Street. It shows a crown, with the year 1936, and the insignia ER VIII. This was to commemorate the accession of Edward VIII to the throne. This is one of a very few in the UK still in situ in its original location.



Castle Park, created in the 17th-century, is a Green Flag winning Park in central Bangor. It contains many mature trees with an arboretum that dates back to the 1840s. A walk through this wooded wonderland is an exhilarating experience throughout the changing seasons.



Clandeboyne Golf Club

Bangor has 3 attractive and popular golf clubs, Bangor, Clandeboyne and Carnalea. Clandeboyne Golf Club is host to the PGA EuroPro Tour's Northern Ireland Masters for the period 2021-23.

**Ward Park**

A unique town centre park in Bangor covering 37 acres with small lakes, a wildfowl sanctuary, sports facilities and War Memorial. Site of a weekly Park Run and free live music events during the summer.

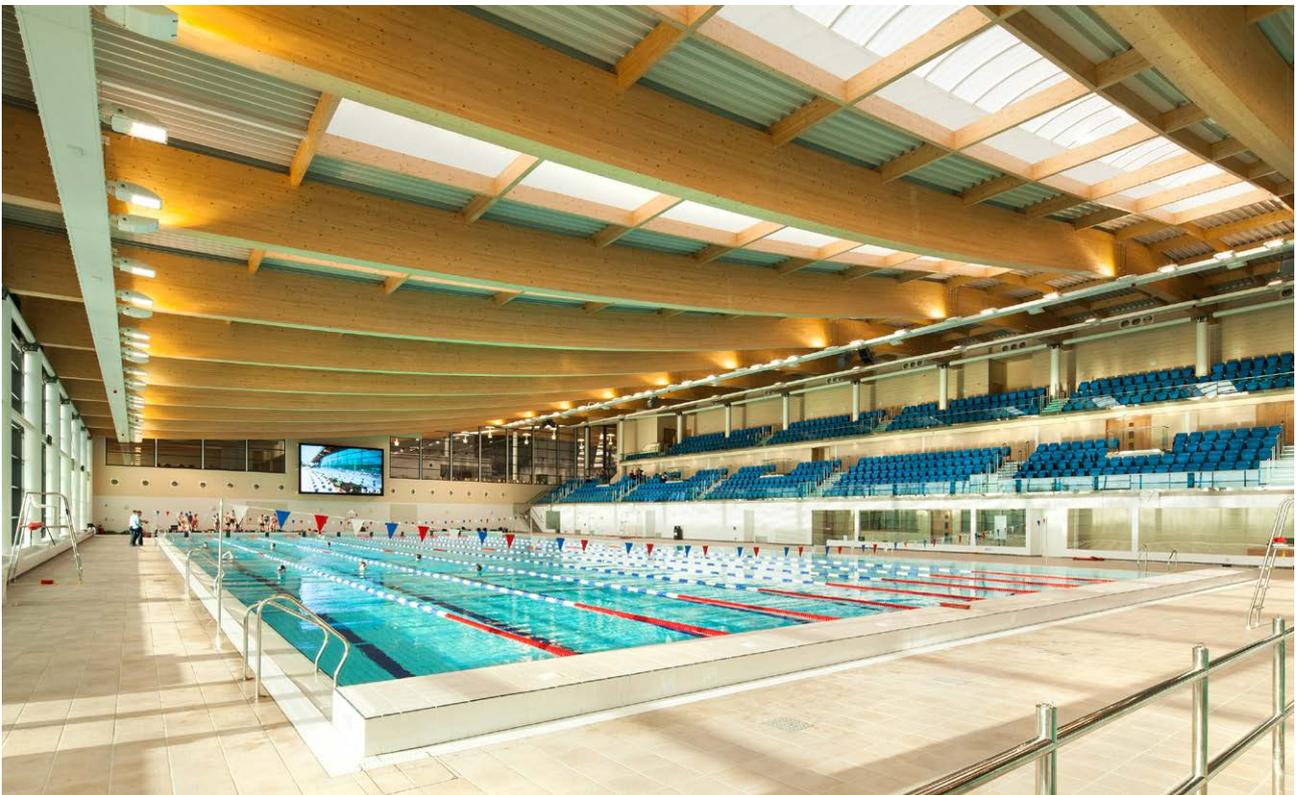
**Ballyholme Esplanade**

A mile-long crescent of sand curving along the bay against a backdrop of handsome Edwardian terrace houses. A favourite sea bathing spot for generations, the beach is used all year round by families, swimmers and windsurfers.



Bangor Aurora Wellbeing and Leisure Complex

Situated in the heart of Bangor, this £38M complex was opened by HRH The Princess Royal in 2013. The complex offers a host of aquatic, sports and wellbeing activities. It boasts some highly sophisticated sustainable design features.



50m pool at Bangor Aurora

This is Northern Ireland's only 50m ten-lane FINA international standard pool with seating for a thousand spectators. The complex also houses an elite diving centre and performance development centre for elite athletes.



Bangor Market

Bangor Market, which trades from a site just off the main street in the town centre, has been operating for almost 100 years. In May 2021 traders were delighted to welcome HRH The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall.



Bloomfield Shopping Centre

One of four retail parks in Bangor, Bloomfield has over 50 retailers split between a covered mall and retail warehouse units.



The Signal Centre

A Council initiative to support small and medium sized enterprises to achieve sustained growth. The centre offers a 'one stop' gateway for business advice at all stages of a business development journey. More than 1,050 local businesses accessed support during 2020/21.



Whale

Whale manufactures freshwater, bilge and waste pumps and water and space heating system for the international market. The company can trace its origins in Bangor back to 1810.



Clandeboye Estate built in 17th Century, remains in the ownership of the original family. It is a popular events space, working farm and home of Clandeboye Nature Rangers – a Forest Schools Initiative.



The Columban Way Heritage Trail between Comber and Bangor was officially launched in October 2021. It forms part of the wider European 'Via Columbani', tracing the route from Mount Leinster to Bangor, across eight countries of Europe, and finishing in Bobbio, Italy.



Bangor is an energy – town centre mural celebrating Bangor's creative heart and punk roots.



Aspects Festival is an annual celebration of Irish Writing held in Bangor. The festival celebrated its 30th birthday in 2021. Pictured is Lemn Sissay performing at Bangor Castle.



Project 24 was established by the Council in 2013 to regenerate an area of derelict land on the seafront in Bangor. It offers local artists the opportunity to access a town centre space in the shape of a low rent 'pod' where they can develop, display and sell their work.



SPACE is South Eastern Regional College's (SERC) performing arts centre in Bangor town centre. SERC is the top performing further education college in Northern Ireland.



Whitespots Country Park on the edge of Bangor but linked to it by the Clandeboye Estate, offers great potential as a heritage (Leadmines and World War I) and leisure asset (walking and cycling). The Council has recently secured Levelling Up funding that will enable it to progress plans for a greenway connection at this location.



HMS Bangor, pictured docked in Bangor Marina, is one of seven Sandown-class Mine Counter-Measures Vessels (MCMV) in the Royal Navy. It is primarily based at Clyde Naval Base in Faslane, Scotland but visits Bangor regularly. Ship and crew have played a key role in many local events in recent years.



Bangor celebrates the Diamond Jubilee

In 2012, Bangor hosted a weekend of celebrations including a garden party, visit by HMS Bangor and spectacular light projection on Bangor Castle.



Civic Events are an important part of the event calendar in Bangor. Pictured is the gun salute at Bangor Castle for the Prince of Wales' birthday in 2017.



Bangor's ambitious regeneration plans will seek to enhance the town's existing assets for new generations. Pictured is **Pickie Fun Park**, one of Northern Ireland's top ten most popular visitor attractions, which will benefit from investment to develop new all-weather features.

Ards and North Down Borough Council
Recycling Community Investment Fund
YOUR RECYCLING PAYS

SEABIN PROJECT
FOR A CLEANER OCEAN

QUAY

THE SEABIN PROJECT

The Seabin Project is funded by Ards and North Down Council's Recycling Community Investment Fund and possibly through the money saved by the recycling efforts of residents and businesses across our Borough.

A seabin is a floating rubbish bin that sucks waste from the water of docks and marinas, removing hazards to marine life.

HOW THE SEABIN WORKS

EACH SEABIN CAN CAPTURE TONS OF WASTE A YEAR

Seabins

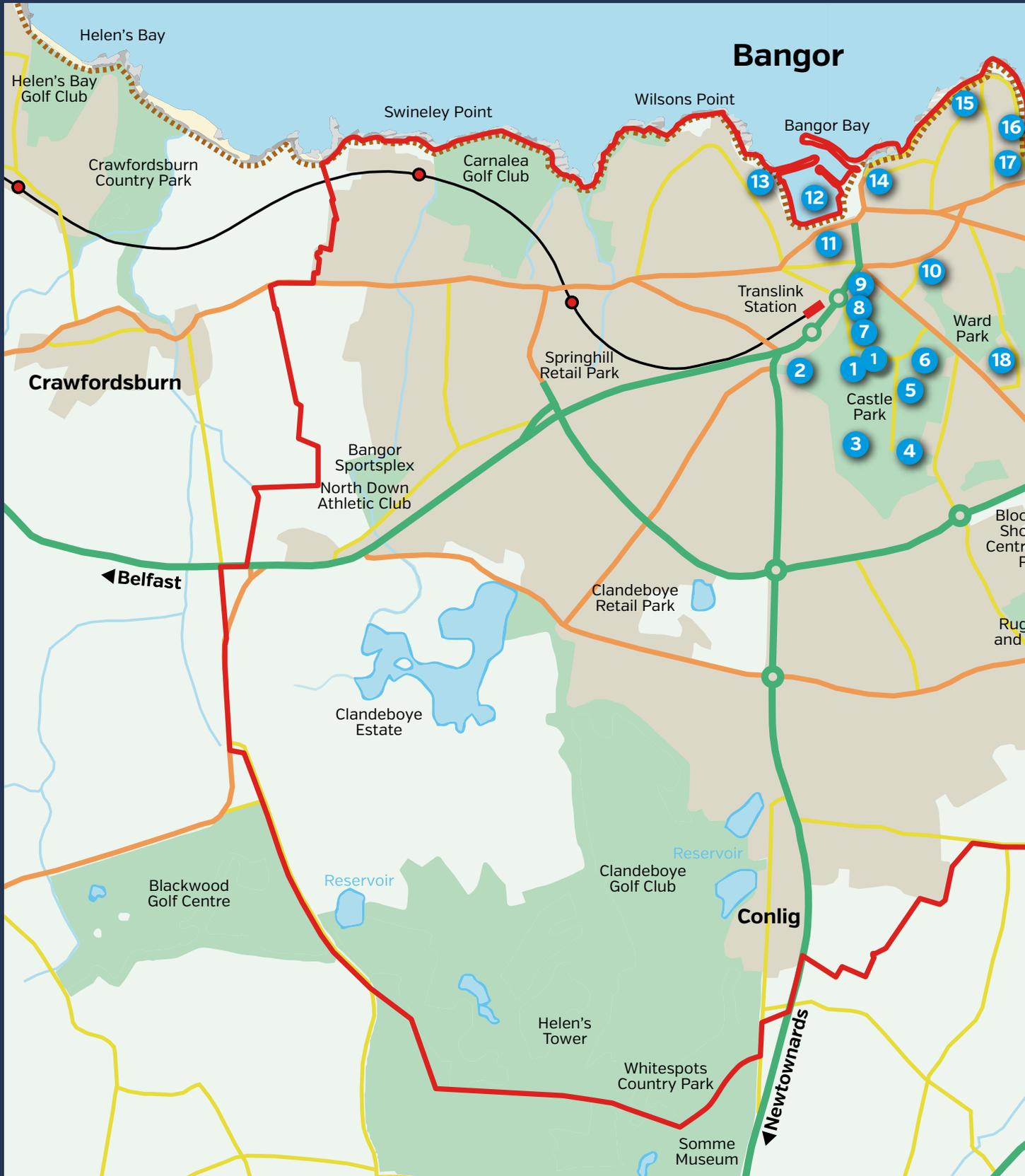
The Council's commitment to sustainability is showcased in Bangor Marina where the first 'seabins' in Northern Ireland were sited in 2018. These bins suck waste from the water, removing hazards to marine life.



Bangor's coastal location is perhaps its key selling point. The Council's regeneration plans will provide Bangor with a world class facility for water sports and the ability to host international events.



Bangor Marina is already Northern Ireland's largest and most prestigious award-winning marina with Blue Flag status. As part of the Council's regeneration plans it will be enhanced with additional public access, viewing areas and cafés.





Town Centre Key

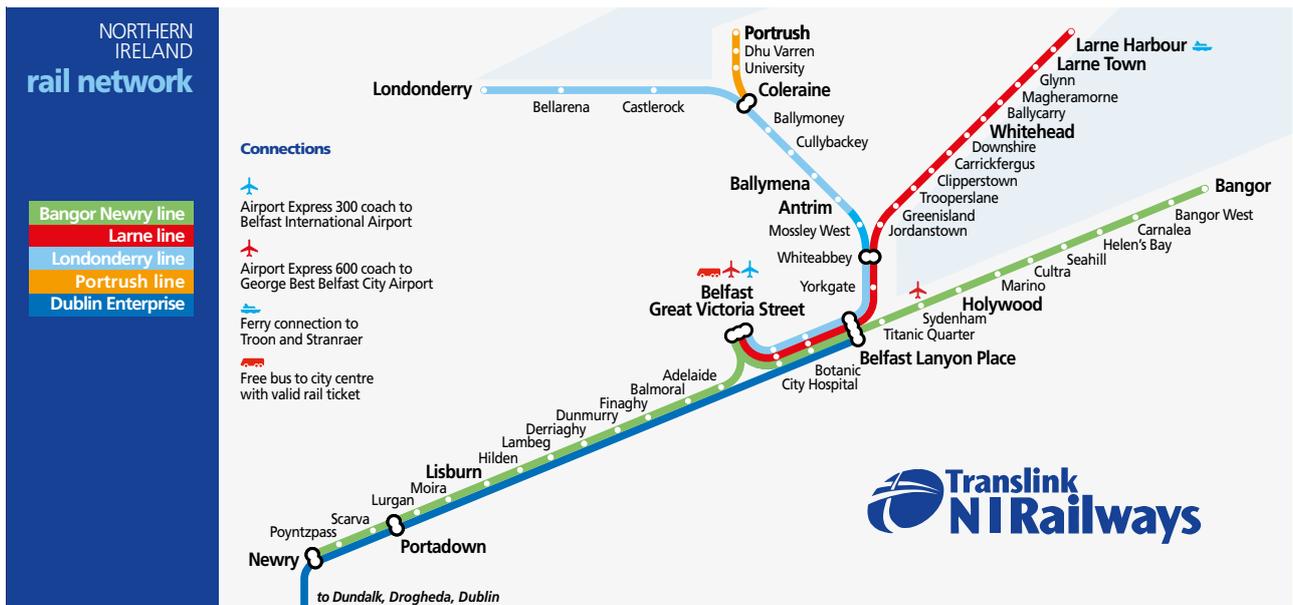
- 1 Bangor Castle/North Down Museum
- 2 Bangor Abbey
- 3 Bangor Castle Walled Garden
- 4 Bangor Aurora Aquatic and Leisure Complex
- 5 Omniplex Cinema
- 6 South Eastern Regional College
- 7 Premier Inn
- 8 Police Station
- 9 Bangor Market
- 10 North Down Cycling Club
- 11 Project 24
- 12 Bangor Marina
- 13 Pickie Fun Park
- 14 Marine Court Hotel/Salty Dog
- 15 Royal Ulster Yacht Club
- 16 Ballyholme Yacht Club
- 17 Cairn Bay Lodge
- 18 Pickie Bowling Club



BANGOR'S TRANSPORT ROUTES

Translink is the main public transport provider in Northern Ireland. A Translink bus centre and rail station is located in Bangor town centre.

Rail Service



The rail service from Bangor town centre to Belfast city centre (green route on map), from where connections can be made to the rest of Northern Ireland and Dublin, runs 7 days a week. The standard journey time from Bangor to Belfast is 30 minutes but a number of express trains run during the busiest commuting times in the morning and late afternoon/early evening, which take only 22 minutes.

Bangor to Belfast

Monday to Friday	First train: 6.10am	Last train: 10.25pm	Number of train services: 52
Saturday	First train: 6.55am	Last train: 10.25pm	Number of train services: 30
Sunday	First train: 8.22am	Last train: 9.25pm	Number of train services: 14

The same number of train services from Belfast arrive at Bangor each day i.e. 52 trains arrive into Bangor station Monday to Friday, 30 on Saturdays and 14 on Sundays.

Bus services

There are 8 different bus routes that operate within the town, starting and ending in Bangor's Translink bus centre, ensuring all residential areas are served and that facilities, such as Bloomfield Shopping Centre, can be accessed by public transport.

There are also 11 bus routes that connect Bangor to Belfast, to the Ulster Hospital and to towns and villages elsewhere in the Ards and North Down Borough (Newtownards, Donaghadee, Millisle and Ballywalter).

The times and frequency of these bus routes vary but they tend to run during the day Monday to Saturday, at least once an hour (more frequently on busier routes), with some services also running on a Sunday. Separate to this, there are dedicated school bus routes that bring local children to secondary schools in Bangor and the surrounding area.

