



CASTLE LESLIE

An Historic Estate Wrapped in Nature

Private document. For your eyes only.

*One of the last historic Irish Castles and Estates still
in the hands of its founding family, and one of the best
examples of a working estate and estate village in Ireland.*

Professor Terence Dooley, Head of Department of Modern History, Professor of History at Maynooth University, National University of Ireland and Director of the Centre for Historic Irish Houses and Estates.



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Not for circulation.



Photography by Declan Devlin

INTRODUCTION

GRIP FAST

We live in lands carved by giant Glaciers over 10,000 years ago, and these very lands have shaped our shared past. Over the last four eventful centuries, the Castle Leslie Estate, and the community of Glaslough have been as one, our fortunes forever entwined.

Just 30 years ago, at the tender age of 24 my father gave me the front door key, and little else. I received one fifth of one third of the remnants of the Estate, and over the decades have I have striven to pull this amazing place back together.

In 1992 with a handful of fine local teenagers, a talented baker and a £5k grant from the County Enterprise Board, I first opened the tea rooms in the leaky conservatory of the castle. And so began my journey to create what you see today – one of Ireland’s finest country estates to come and stay on.

My 100-year plan was always to build a strong social enterprise which reinvests everything to support nature and heritage-led restoration on the estate within communities. One day I hoped we would get to a place to be able to do all the other things we really wanted to, put very simply – **to create the best place to live, learn, work, stay and play in a planet friendly way.**

The creation of the Leslie Foundation in 2017 is core to this mission, it was the missing part of the jigsaw.

In a world lurching from one crisis to another I am driven by a simple philosophy to create a new way of thinking and working. It’s about collaboration with all the voices in our communities. It’s about inclusion, diversity, climate justice and equality in all its guises and anchored deeply in an appreciation of the value of our natural capital – the beauty and richness of this land.

I want to stimulate constant debate on circular projects, circular economies, and inclusive thinking, and I want Castle Leslie to be a beacon of best practice, a genuine pioneer project in the world of true sustainability, a champion for climate justice and a place where people come to stay, live, learn, heal and recharge.

You will therefore find that our manifesto is bold, and our purpose is clear.

It sets out how we will protect, restore, and share this land for the centuries to come, wrapping it in nature and positioning Castle Leslie as one of Ireland’s finest working estate destinations.

The possibilities are endless, this is a personal invitation to you, dear reader, to join us and help deliver something quite special.

Sammy Leslie
Current Custodian

OUR PLACE IN TIME

Our Time Here



1660

A staunch royalist John Leslie (The Fighting Bishop) defended the North against Cromwellian forces. Upon the restoration he was granted £2,000 for his expenses by parliament. This money was used to purchase the lands at Glaslough.

He was appointed by King Charles II to the Irish House of Commons.

At his death in 1671, in his 100th year, he transmitted his estate to his children.

Innovation and Famine



1800's

The Estate is at its height. State of the art steam powered model farm is built by John Powell Leslie 1st, supporting mills, forges, a pottery, brickworks and the furniture factory in the village.

Famine strikes and Christina Leslie takes over the Estate. Oversees the Leslie Relief Programme and the building of the famine wall.

Turbulent Times



1950-90

Post war Ireland struggles to emerge from depression. Family returns from WWII.

Sir John Leslie (Jack) acquires Badia di San Sebastiano, Alatri in Italy.

Civil Rights campaign erupts in Northern Ireland and 'The Troubles' begin.

Castle slides into disrepair.

Picking up the Pieces



2000's

Sammy returns home to run the estate and Peace returns to Ireland.

Paul McCartney and Heather Mills marry at the Castle and the restoration and regeneration project begins.

Castle Leslie awarded Fáilte Ireland's Gold Medal (Best Customer Experience in Ireland).

Castle Leslie Innovation, Project and Enterprises (established in 2006), builds 74 new homes in the village of Glaslough.

Safeguarding the Future



Photography by Declan Devlin

2020's

The Leslie Foundation formed in 2017, the missing piece of the jigsaw.

The Estate sets out its manifesto for a transition to a major eco-estate destination.

Major projects are initiated to rewild the estate, develop a skills academy and new green visitor infrastructure. Equine assisted therapies and respite, diaspora engagement, nature and heritage-led regeneration.

OUR PURPOSE

Protect, Restore and Share.

Castle Leslie Estate is nestled on 1,000 acres of undulating Irish countryside, dotted with ancient woodland and glittering lakes. It is one of the last Irish Historic Estates still within its founding family.

Castle Leslie Estate has always been part of a wider community. What we do here impacts on livelihoods across our border region and touches the hearts of our diaspora.





Many generations have shared in life on the estate and relied upon it for their living. We have deep ties that date back centuries. Our vision for the Estate will therefore resonate beyond these walls and bring benefits to our whole community which will be far reaching.

Following significant investment and a gentle restoration programme over the last three decades, the estate now employs over 200 local people and contributes over €10m to the local economy.

We are transitioning from leaders in the hospitality sector to purveyors of a working estate that places nature recovery at the heart of everything we do.

We are diversifying our skills and refocusing to build a place with a new kind prosperity and wellbeing in every sense.

Now is the time to move Castle Leslie Estate into a new dimension, a place of dynamic innovation, creativity and learning.

To support the nature and heritage-led regeneration of the lands and along with the sensitive restoration of our heritage buildings, we will invest in specialist skills in rewilding, restorative farming, climate resilience, biodiversity development, sustainable energy, and building conservation. These are the ingredients that combined will help us to deliver the immersive Irish country estate experience our future visitors expect.

We are setting the course for lasting sustainability and anchoring our future firmly in the currency of biodiversity, social value, heritage and eco-tourism, creating new opportunities for all in many directions, not least to the towns and villages of our border region and beyond.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

By nurturing talent, creativity and ambition, we are supporting people to grow and honouring those gone before. Listening and learning will be central to all we do.

- + We are committed to protecting nature, wildlife, biodiversity and minimising our negative impact on the planet through our nature led approach.
- + We will continue to foster greater understanding and acceptance of diversity, inclusion and equality.
- + We strive to protect and enhance our place by revitalising and balancing our built, cultural, social and local heritage and by anchoring our projects in community well-being.
- + We celebrate difference and sensitivities in our post conflict society and work to cultivate peace through kindness, understanding and inclusion.

THE CHARITABLE & TRUST STRUCTURE

The Leslie Foundation will play a part in the long-term management of the estate for generations to come, ensuring reinvestment in the estate to support the delivery of its charitable objectives.

The Leslie Foundation 2017

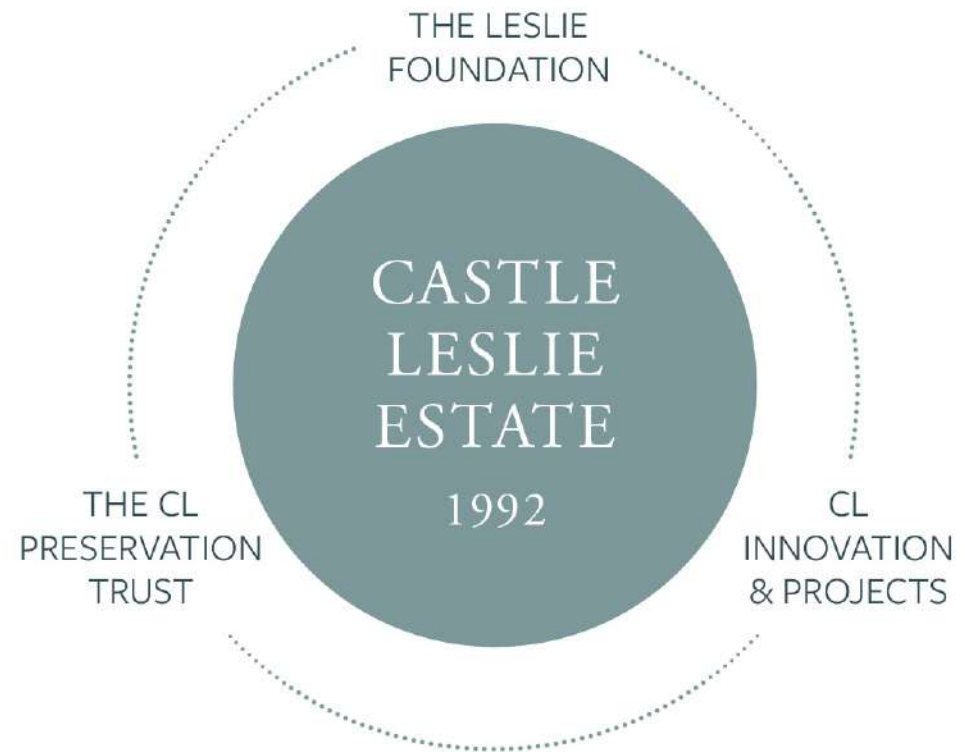
The lead organisation with an appointed Board of Trustees and Chair will build a strong team who drive public benefit through the delivery of their charitable objectives.

CL Innovation and Projects 2006

This is our Innovation Hub which nurtures fledgling ideas for the Foundation, Enterprise, projects and the Preservation Trust. It facilitates growth as best suited. It is anticipated this entity will merge with Castle Leslie Estate and become the enterprise arm of the company, driving our long-term commercial activities and delivering our development programmes.

The Castle Leslie Preservation Trust 2000

Charged with the protection of our buildings, collections and archives, the Trust will safeguard and nurture the heritage assets of the Estate, and form working relationships with suitable partners, on and off the Estate.



OUR IMPACT



OUR SIGNATURE PROJECTS

Following significant investment and a gentle restoration programme over the last three decades, the Castle Leslie Estate now employs over 200 local people at the height of the season and contributes over €10m to the local economy.

As we go forward the Foundation's programme will accelerate our transition to see Castle Leslie Estate develop into Ireland's most compelling eco-estate destination.

The subsequent pages highlight our signature projects, and show the diversity, depth, breadth and reach possible.

We have much to do and cannot make the magic happen on our own. We are actively seeking like-minded bodies, innovators, institutions, corporate or private individuals to help us fund and deliver our signature projects.

If you are drawn to a particular project or theme we would be delighted to discuss a possible role for you as a project sponsor, supporter, funder or partner.

Contact details for Sammy are provided at the back of this document.



An Bosca Glas – The Big Green Box.

In keeping with the spirit of innovation, we want to develop a new and contemporary biophilic space on a site overlooking Glaslough lake that will be our new welcome and orientation centre on the estate and serving the local area. The concept of a 'Green Box' has been called out as a Hero project in the Monaghan Destination and Experience Development Plan, recently launched (June 2022) by Fáilte Ireland in partnership with Monaghan County Council.

This world class high-tech green space will explore and explain our relationship with plants and the planet over the millennia and into the future. It will also offer space to protect and exhibit estate archives and collections in a contemporary gallery setting.

This is an event and exhibition space to support our expanding experience programme. The themes of biodiversity, soil, water, wind, and sun will be explored in the context of sustainable food production with expanded cookery, food, garden schools and conscientious food and beverage retailing.

+ **Our Aim:** The addition of a contemporary exhibition, events, archives, research and gathering space enabling the Estate to deliver major training and conference programmes.

+ **Our Outcomes:** Development of a new high-tech sustainable venue and commercial exhibition facility at the Estate to help build our profile as a centre of excellence in research training and rural skills development.

+ **Our Ask:** As a smart sustainable newbuild development on the estate, this project must be handled with great care and sensitivity. We wish to create an exemplary world class eco building that could for example, have naming rights assigned in lieu of a sponsorship donation or a charitable gift to help deliver the project either exclusively or in partnership with others.



Image: Macallan Visitor Centre, Speyside, Scotland

The Walled Garden, Glasshouse, Pineapple & Banana House Restoration.

A major restoration of the historic walled garden and amazing pineapple glass houses at Castle Leslie as a regional visitor attraction with an integral food experience and teaching project.

This project is also aligned to the Monaghan Destination and Experience Development Plan and directly connected to the 'The Big Green Box' concept. Initial work has commenced led by Professor Terry Stevens, Stevens & Associates, to consider how the Walled Garden could be developed as a unique visitor attraction. A funding model to bring this magnificent historic site back to its original Victorian splendour needs considered.

- ✦ **Our Aim:** The comprehensive heritage restoration of the Castle Leslie Walled Garden, the derelict glass houses, banana and pineapple house transforming it into major regional visitor attraction.
- ✦ **Our Outcomes:** Reconstruction of the derelict pineapple glass houses and the formal layout of the Walled Garden. Development of a food production strategy, garden school and events programme to be housed within the Walled Garden and linked to our education and rural skills academy.
- ✦ **Our Ask:** We need partners and sponsors to help us fund the restoration programme at the Walled Garden and raise the finance to leverage support from national funding partners. You could contribute to this through The Foundation or directly sponsor a glasshouse or structure, an outdoor teaching pavilion or a specialist planting or horticultural programme for the garden itself.



Vintage Village & Artisan Centre.

Learn and Share

Building on the already varied community of creatives, we want to develop an artisan makers quarter, helping to build on and sustain independent commercial activity in our community within the heart of the village of Glaslough.

- + **Our Aim:** To establish an artisan maker's collective in the heart of the village of Glaslough as part of an integrated live/work regeneration project.
- + **Our Outcomes:** To create a sensitively designed development in the heart of Glaslough providing a cluster of new, purpose built spaces for small independent artisan producers to create, make, teach and sell within the community.
- + **Our Ask:** We are seeking a partner with experience in this area to help us deliver a fully integrated, creative and sustainable project.





Artist's Retreat & Residency.

As home to generations of writers, artists, and musicians, it is only fitting we carve out a space for creatives to come and stay and work. The gothic lodge, which is currently endangered, with its huge light giving gothic window and fantastical stone and ironwork gates, is such an inspiring location.

✦ **Our Aim:** To restore the Gothic Lodge and establish it as an artist's retreat. This will be the primary project for the Foundation, one for them to 'cut their teeth on' before they embark on the delivery of the larger scale projects of The Green Box and the Walled Garden Restoration.

✦ **Our Outcomes:** A self-contained artist retreat, which can be hired or offered as a residency throughout the year. A delightful space for a single or two people to stay with a studio space for indoor work and the wide estate for outdoor work.

✦ **Our Ask:** We are looking for match funding/sponsorship for this artists project.



Assisted Rewilding, Restorative Farming, Biodiversity Kind Gardens & Vertical Food Production.

Nature Led Regeneration

Rewilding is a progressive approach to conservation. It is about assisting nature to take care of herself, enabling natural processes to shape land and water, repair damaged ecosystems and restore degraded landscapes.

Through rewilding, we will create greater carbon capture and wilder, more biodiverse habitats. Work is already underway with funding in place to deliver the initial planning and ecology baseline studies but for nature to return we have so much more to do.

Through Restorative Farming, removing the invasive species and non-native woodlands, and ensuring all our gardening activities are considered, the Estate will become a much richer haven for nature.

✦ **Our Aim:** The nature led regeneration of land, woodlands, bogs, waterways, and lakes with measured benefits for biodiversity, air quality, soil health, water purity and carbon capture.

In parallel exploring new ways to go nutrient dense and low carbon impact foods through vertical food production.

✦ **Our Outcomes:** To Restore and Protect this natural environment. To research the traditional skills and regenerative farming practices of old and in doing so create traditional skills learning and educational programmes and academy onsite. We will create employment, supporting the local circular economy in the border region and align to the proposed National Centre for Heritage & Traditional Skills Learning, whilst sharing our new found knowledge and data.

✦ **Our Ask:** We are seeking financial sponsorship to assist in the funding of key aspects of these projects. You could sponsor a woodland, a wetland habitat or vertical food production, help with the removal of invasive species or be a champion for the reintroduction of a native species. There will be many ways to help with our biodiversity restoration programme.



Immersive Estate Accommodation & Experiences.

Stay and Play

Wrapped in nature and at one with the rewilding experience, new facilities covering accommodation and well-being will be developed sensitively within the ancient woodlands of the estate and on the secluded waters of Kelvi and Glaslough lakes.

The wellbeing initiative will be dedicated to the provision of therapeutic practices using the natural environment of the estate as our treatment space, linked and coordinated with our rewilding, our equine assisted therapies and our rural skills programme.

Together with a new suite of luxury lodges immersed in our landscape they will bring a new dimension to the hospitality and well-being experience already established at Castle Leslie.

- + **Our Aim:** To have a woodlands accommodation, water based, treetop, subterranean and well-being offer introduced to the Estate, complementing the rewilding strategy of the land.
- + **Our Outcomes:** A state of the art, eco-designed cabin and floating accommodation offer and wellbeing hub, delivering an unparalleled immersive experience of nature based living in a rewilded Irish landscape.
- + **Our Ask:** This project will be led by the experienced hospitality team at Castle Leslie but we are seeking investment partners and innovators to help establish the funds to implement a project of scale.



Equine Assisted Therapies, Woodland Therapeutic Experiences & Rural Respite.

Tailored to Individual Learning Need

Over the decades our understanding of how children learn and develop has changed massively. In past times, if a child didn't learn in the expected way, they were disregarded or worse. As a dyslexic having gone through 9 schools by the age of 15, I rode horses for a living and became fascinated by how we learn and develop, so this is an area very close to my heart.

Managing the many facets of Multiple Sclerosis, Cancer recovery and long-Covid has fuelled my fascination with understanding how the brain functions, and the positive impact of nature.

✦ **Our Aim:** We will use our range of facilities and the magic of the Estate to offer varying and appropriate combination of experiences, therapies and nature immersive therapies, to help

heal and unlock the potential of every child, teenager and adult alike.

✦ **Our Outcomes:** To repurpose the 1990's indoor area into a suitable space for children with Autism and other learning and developmental issues, and to become a centre of excellence for those that the current system often fails.

To create times and spaces for families to enjoy a rural respite in a supported way.

To create nature-rich woodland experiences that are therapeutic have scientifically proven benefits for all.

✦ **Our Ask:** We are inviting investment in the restoration of the 1990's indoor arena, yards, and trails. In addition, we are seeking funding to enable research into other services we could offer on the Estate that will help ensure we can offer a wide a demographic a place on the estate to heal and grow.



"Riding a well trained horse in nature produces a massive and positive impact on the human brain and nervous system.

The constant rhythmic rocking of the rider's hips produces the hormone oxytocin in the human body. This is the happiness and communication hormone. It also soothes the nervous system and boosts the immune system.

When this is combined with nature – which has no bad sensory triggers – and the need to balance over varied terrain – which the brain perceives as problem solving, it produces a special protein in the brain that neuroscientists call BDNF (Brain Derived Neurotrophic Factor). Cognitive function is optimised. The intellect is enhanced.

Oxytocin plus BDNF is well being of the highest order."

Robert Issacson, New Trails Learning Systems.





Traditional Rural Skills, Hospitality & Innovation Academy.

Learning

At the heart of everything we are doing at Castle Leslie Estate is the commitment to continuous learning and skills development. As a working estate, there is always the need for a skilled workforce in land management, historic building restoration, regenerative farming, horticulture, woodland and biodiversity management.

In the hospitality industry there is always a need for cooks, chefs, food and beverage professionals, and trained gardeners guides and estate rangers.

The skills academy is also where visitors can participate in live conservation training and experiences as part of a package of working holiday projects centred on all of these areas.

There are many skills that will be offered to people of all learning abilities, as part of a therapy and/or upskilling.

- ✦ **Our Aim:** To build an accredited rural skills academy in partnership with regional, national and international learning organisations as core to our working estate practices but also as an integral part of our visitor experience, and varied therapy offering.
- ✦ **Our Outcomes:** We will restore the Victorian Model Farmyard into a teaching and learning academy with accredited courses developed in partnership with regional third level academic institutions north, south and further afield.
- ✦ **Our Ask:** We are seeking partnerships, philanthropic gifts, sponsorship and bursaries to help with restoration and the development of our skills academy by way of investment in our facilities or sponsorship of our learning programmes.



Built Heritage, Archives, Collections & Collective Memory.

With over 78,000 sq ft of historic buildings the Castle Leslie Estate is poised to become an exemplar of heritage-led regeneration. The Castle Leslie Estate and the Leslie family have a unique and fascinating history. Having now passed through ten generations of the family, the house remains a testament to these histories and stories, many of which have never been told. These stories are not just those of the Leslie family, but the wider community and those who worked on the Estate. And there is still so much more social history to be gathered, particularly in relation to traditional skills and life on the border.

- + **Our Aim:** To collect, protect and share the stories and artefacts of life in the big house, the wider estate, the village of Glaslough, the wider community and the border region.
- + **Our Outcomes:** A dedicated space within the Green Box exhibiting the archive of the history of Castle Leslie including artefacts and stories from those who worked on the estate and also capturing the wider history of life on the border. The space will be designed to accommodate academic and genealogical research, provide an educational resource that will also promote a shared understanding.

- + **Our Ask:** We are seeking collaboration and funding from cross border bodies and academic institutions to help us preserve and build on our unique historical resource, ensuring it can be experienced by many and shared as an educational and inspirational resource.



Jack Leslie returning from the war, welcomed by local children.

The Famine Wall.

Memorial and Restoration

This is one of the most emotive and moving stories of the Famine in Ireland tracing the survival of an entire community through one of the darkest periods in Irish History – a project lead with bravery and compassion by Christina Leslie and her son Charles Powell Leslie III.

The Famine Wall project traces the social history story of the Leslie Relief Programme during the Irish Famine of the 1840's, its impact on the local community and its reach to the diaspora of North -West Canada and the US. The project saved many lives and we want to conserve the 4km famine wall as a monument to these events and the people who built it.

- + **Our Aim:** To protect and restore this important historic built living heritage and to tell the story of the local people who built the wall and those who emigrated to Canada, the US and further.
- + **Our Outcomes:** To restore and protect this man-made, hand cut traditional wall, by using traditional skills and in doing so create a skills learning and educational programme. In addition, we need to build an interpretive centre at Dinkin's Lodge and a sensory garden and Home Stones project on the estate, offering post trauma healing to our cross-border community and marking the significance of this story for Co Monaghan and our global diaspora.

- + **Our Ask:** We are seeking sponsors to assist with further research, the restoration of this great wall and the restoration of the derelict Dinkin's Lodge as an interpretive venue and the construction of a new sensory garden to provide a focus of commemoration for this seminal moment in our history.



Creating Homes.

Sustainable Living

There is a long and proud history of landed estates building homes and providing secure long-term tenancies for their employees and workers. Indeed, there is a heritage architecture devoted to this practice that marks the distinctiveness of our village townscapes across North County Monaghan. Castle Leslie Estate will continue this tradition and build new homes using a range of tenancy/ownership models.

- ✦ **Our Aim:** To bridge the housing affordability gap in County Monaghan and introduce a shared living model for all generations, reinventing the tradition of high-quality rental estate housing and offering unique purchase opportunities.
- ✦ **Our Outcomes:** The delivery of carefully selected new build and restoration projects for long term secure letting and sale, within Glaslough and on the Estate grounds. Creating affordable and accessible opportunities for existing and new residents.
- ✦ **Our Ask:** We will seek to work in partnership with the County Council and specialist housing providers as well as those philanthropic donors who have an interest in developing new shared housing models. Rural Ireland is crying out for innovation in this space. Help us shape something new.



Sustainable Resource Management.

Leave No Trace

Our commitment to nature requires that we consider how we manage water, waste, energy and travel more sustainably. We are part of a steering group working toward creating a Sustainable Energy Community for Glaslough. We want to play a full role in this and help develop a project that can minimise our energy and carbon impact. Following on from our pioneering integrated wetland project with Monaghan County Council and academic partners, we must continue to develop new solutions to carefully manage our use of water, waste and energy.

- + **Our Aim:** To use all our natural and built resources to help achieve a sustainable energy and waste strategy for Castle Leslie Estate and our network of heritage villages and to be self-sustaining in own right in our energy production and use. To develop practices that help visitors significantly lighten the carbon footprint of their travel.
- + **Our Outcomes:** A multi-faceted strategy to recycle, reuse and restore, and to be energy self-sufficient through a combination of technologies and new practices using all our resources to maximum effect.
- + **Our Ask:** We need funding and sponsorship to explore and develop a range of complementary practices and new technologies to deal with our energy, waste and water resourcing. For example, we want to develop and expand our composting capacity, improve our water storage, harness the value of geothermal power within our lakes, and develop solar power from our south facing drumlin hills.





OUR IMPACT POTENTIAL ACROSS OUR SHARED ISLANDS

With 10,000 years of shared history, our past is proudly rooted in collaboration and respect across the ancient Kingdom of Oriel and the many historic parishes of Monaghan, Tyrone and Armagh. We are regenerating for a better-connected shared future. It is in our very DNA to work hand in hand with our neighbours.

We are investing in our future at a time when Ireland, in partnership with the European Union and the United Kingdom are introducing new structural funding programmes to build economic cooperation and resilience within our border region.

The Shared Island Platform, Peace Plus and other programmes have the power to transform our investment landscape over the next decade and we want our vision at Castle Leslie Estate to be part of this.

Our portfolio of heritage led, environmental and learning projects will build a common legacy.

The importance of people has long been evident, from the work of our ancestors to our present-day endeavours. Our transformative ambitions will connect people and contribute to thriving communities across the island.

By protecting our planet, restoring our heritage, and sharing our learnings we are making sure that the seeds sown on the Estate and in the cross-border area thrive.

To reach our full potential, we are looking beyond our walls and borders, through our common goals to connect and protect, we are shaping the shared future of the Estate, the community of Glaslough and our neighbouring towns and villages in the border region.

We will partner with like-minded people, bodies and institutions whilst collaborating with cross border teams, to share knowledge that will empower us to make the most of the immense opportunities afforded to us through these new international platforms and funding programmes.

There has never been a better time to forge a path that can deliver investment at scale into our social, environmental, heritage and learning vision for Castle Leslie Estate.

Your collaboration could help us unlock this opportunity.

PLAY YOUR PART

We are forging a new path, beyond anything this island has witnessed before.



We are securing a legacy that will benefit the region and its people for generations to come.



We are working towards a sustainable future - one that is Peaceful, kind to the Planet, to its People, and to this Place.

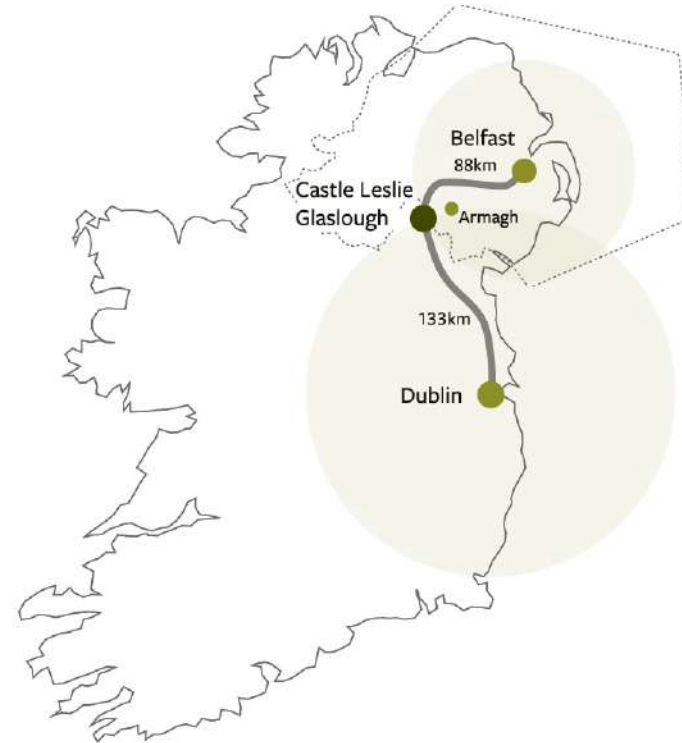
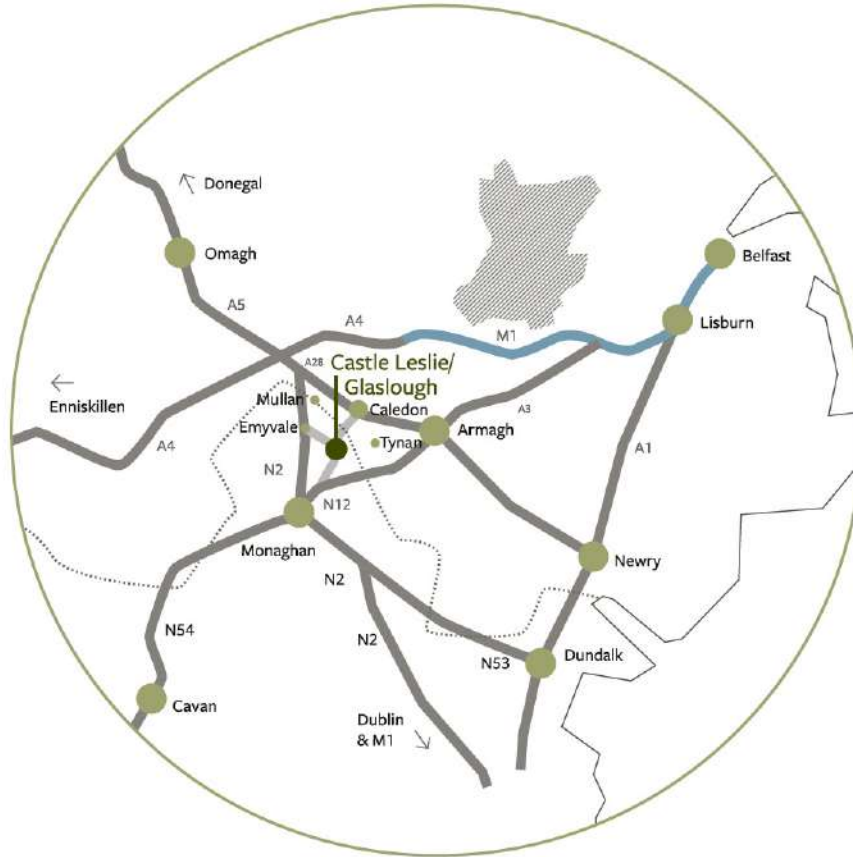


We are seeking innovators, collaborators, co-creators, investors, philanthropists and funders who share our vision.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Grip Fast

OUR LOCATION



Conveniently located between two international airports, Castle Leslie Estate is 80 minutes from Dublin and 60 minutes from Belfast. Castle Leslie Estate is located just off the N2, 10 minutes north of Monaghan Town and 15 minutes from Armagh City.



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