

KILLEEDY ECO PARK – SENSORY CHALLENGE

LOOK (Sight)

1 Find a tree with two different colours of moss.

Fun fact: Moss only grows where the air is clean – so two species growing together shows excellent local air quality.

2 Spot a bird perched on the new bird boxes.

Fun fact: Blue tits can eat up to 15,000 caterpillars while rearing a single brood.

3 Find the “oldest tree” in the park (the early planting from 2020–2021).

Fun fact: Mature native trees capture 20+ kg of CO₂ a year each.

4 Find a plant with leaves shaped like a heart.

(E.g., willow, birch saplings often have heart-shaped leaves.)

Fun fact: Willow trees can grow up to 1 metre per year.

5 Spot insects on flowers without disturbing them.

Fun fact: 80% of flowering plants rely on insect pollination.

LISTEN (Hearing)

1 Listen for running water near the reed-bed or stream.

Fun fact: A single reed-bed can naturally filter wastewater for the entire park.

2 Hear three different bird calls.

Fun fact: Robins sing even in winter – they’re one of the only Irish birds that do.

3 Listen for the wind moving differently in tall and short grasses.

Fun fact: Grass “whistles” change pitch depending on blade height.

4 Try to hear the crack of a twig under your foot.

Fun fact: Dry twigs crack because the inner fibres shrink as they lose moisture.

5 Hear silence for 10 seconds.

Fun fact: Forest silence reduces stress hormones in just 5 minutes.

Funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht and Limerick and City and County Council under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme.

TOUCH (Feel)

1 Touch the bark of three different trees.

Fun fact: Ash bark is smooth, oak bark is bumpy, and birch bark peels naturally.

2 Feel the cool air in the shade vs. the warm sun.

Fun fact: A tree canopy can reduce temperatures by up to 7°C.

3 Pick up a stone and feel if it’s smooth or rough.

Fun fact: Smooth stones come from slow river or glacial action.

4 Touch a leaf as big as your hand.

Fun fact: Large leaves help plants capture more weak Irish sunlight.

5 Feel the softness of long grass.

Fun fact: Long grass is home to beetles and protects ground-nesting insects.

SMELL (Scent)

1 Smell crushed grass.

Fun fact: The smell comes from plant chemicals released to warn other plants of damage.

2 Find a plant that has a sweet smell (gorse, meadowsweet, etc.).

Fun fact: Gorse flowers smell like coconut because they contain natural esters.

3 Smell damp soil in a shaded spot.

Fun fact: The smell is “geosmin,” made by soil bacteria that are good for the ecosystem.

4 Smell fresh air near the trees.

Fun fact: Trees release compounds called phytoncides that boost human immunity.

TASTE (Optional and Safe) Use only if a leader is present.

1 Taste a mint leaf if growing in the eco-garden zone.

2 Taste clean rainwater on your hand.

3 Taste blackberry or blackberry leaf (late summer).

4 Taste apple from community orchard (if available).