

Ballymahon and Landévant, France

Ballymahon Twinning Group Takes Brittany by Storm: Fish, Fashion, and Fancy French Food

Hold onto your berets, folks! The Ballymahon Twinning Group just wrapped up a great expedition to Landévant, their twinned town in Northwest France. It was a week of *ooh la la* moments, full of water-based adventures, high-end textiles, and enough baguettes to last a lifetime. The 19-strong delegation from Ballymahon, including two officials from Longford County Council, went all out to make the trip a roaring success.

In a daring move, the group decided to channel their inner sailors and ditched airplanes for a *ferry ride* from Cork to Roscoff aboard Brittany Ferries. The seas were relatively kind, and it gave the crew a crash course in “what it feels like to be a tourist stuck in a car for hours.” Future camper-van tourists to Longford, beware—they now know exactly what you go through.

As soon as they hit French soil, the Landévant Twinning Group rolled out the red carpet. First on the agenda? A boat fishing expedition on the oh-so-charming River Blavet. If rivers were Facebook models, the Blavet would be the kind with an over-the-top filter—just picture-perfect! It's like Ballymahon's River Inny, but with a French accent and less fish. The group didn't reel in too many of their pike, perch, or salmon, although the fish were more “petite” than expected (perhaps they knew dinner was coming). The day was, of course, peppered with coffee breaks, because fishing is exhausting, apparently. The grand finale? A four-hour French feast at the Quai Tabarly angling center, where the night just kept going. And going. And going. Good thing they packed some alka seltser.

The culture didn't stop there. The group gallivanted off to Quimper, Brittany's capital of cool (and old things). They oohed and aahed at the Cathedral of Saint Corentin, a 13th-century wonder that's literally a little bent in the middle. A cathedral with a curve—how very French! Some delegates felt it was just a little “je ne sais quoi.”

Then it was off to the town of Guidel, a spot as cozy as Longford, but with a fashion twist. They toured Le Minor, a high-end textile factory that somehow manages to make factory work look chic. Not only do they produce swanky clothes, but they also run daily tours, combining tourism with industry. The Ballymahon folks left thinking, “We can totally do this, but with wool sweaters.”

The Landévant and Ballymahon twinning groups had their annual meeting, gathering to discuss a few “important” matters like connecting the schools and sporting clubs along with work experience opportunities on both sides of the channel. There was talk of new initiatives, cross-cultural projects, and perhaps an over-enthusiastic mention of a boules international event in Ballymahon, which left the French side smiling politely but somewhat confused.

La présidente of Ballymahon, Breege Murray, graciously thanked the Landévant group for their “esteemed” hospitality, a term she used only because she couldn't quite remember how to say “nonstop food marathon” in French. With the formalities over, everyone

promptly sat down again for yet another round of French cuisine – a feast that seemed to have no end in sight.

By the time dessert arrived (the second or was it third one?), the Ballymahon group had found a new respect for French stamina—at least when it comes to eating.

Everyone left the table feeling more connected than ever before... though possibly in need of a nap or a personal trainer. Ah, the joys of international friendship!

Of course, no trip would be complete without a touch of glamour, and Mayor Pascal Le Calvé pulled out all the stops! He hosted the group at the Mairie (which, for those unfamiliar, is French for “super fancy town hall”), where the wine flowed freely, and the hors d'oeuvres were deliciously bite-sized – emphasis on “bite.” During the speeches, the air was filled with heartfelt comments about Ballymahon and Landevant being basically *besties* forever. Mayor Le Calvé spoke about exciting EU programs and how twinning brings communities together.

Not to be outdone, Longford County Council’s Cathaoirleach, Mr. Mark Casey, followed up with his own warm and sincere speech, emphasizing the importance of cooking up fresh new initiatives around the twinning partnership. It was a perfect blend of friendship, wine, and future plans – what more could you ask for?

By the end of the week, the group was throwing around “bonjour” and “où est le pub?” like seasoned Parisians. And, as a final gift, the Landevant crew promised to help Ballymahon sharpen up their French. So, future exchanges are likely to involve even more adventures—and possibly some new vocabulary beyond “merci” and “croissant.”

