

In the News

Analysis of coverage of Rathkeale by mainstream media
by David Lamont | 1/6s/24

Mainstream media, especially newspapers, radio, and TV, have a significant influence on how people perceive unfamiliar places. Perceptions matter when they effect whether someone thinks of the town as an attractive or unattractive place to live, shop and invest. The behaviour, not ethnicity, of Rathkeale’s large migrant Irish Traveller population¹ appeals to some media so it is highlighted in these statistics.

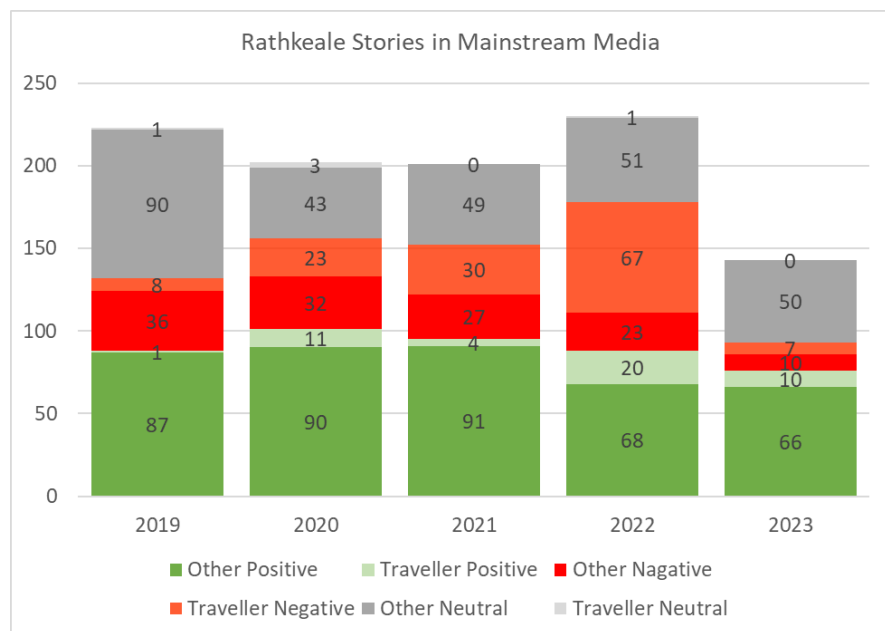
2023 saw fewer stories² than usual with 143 mainstream media stories mentioning Rathkeale. 53% were positive, 12% were negative, and 35% were neutral.

Period	Stories	Other Positive	Traveller Positive	Other Negative	Traveller Negative	Other Neutral	Traveller Neutral
2019	223	39%	0%	16%	4%	40%	0%
2020	202	45%	5%	16%	11%	21%	1%
2021	201	45%	2%	13%	15%	24%	0%
2022	230	30%	9%	10%	29%	22%	0%
2023	143	46%	7%	7%	5%	35%	0%

21% of all the positive stories can be directly attributed to Rathkeale Together.

2023 saw 17 Traveller-related stories. 10 stories were positive thanks to proactive efforts by Rathkeale Together.

The notable change in 2023 was fewer negative stories that frequently focus on Traveller-related crime and anti-social behaviour.



Most news is available online, so the stories accumulate for those searching for information. In turn, these perceptions are spread by word-of-mouth. The following chart shows interest in Rathkeale over a 5-year period relative to a single incident at the end of 2022.



¹ The 2022 Census indicates that Travellers represent 30% of the Rathkeale population but observations suggest it is about 50%, especially from November through March.

² This report likely underrepresents the volume of stories in mainstream media because online articles usually have a harder to find paper version. Some off-line stories may not be found at all. Social media stories are usually omitted as are passing references (e.g. Covid statistics or minor sporting events,) and irrelevant mentions of the town name (e.g. Rathkeale-Adare Council meeting.) ¶ In general, positive stories are deemed likely to attract and negative ones repel people to/from Rathkeale, or they may create a positive or negative impression of the town. Whether a story is deemed positive, negative, or neutral has a subjective element. For example, was the 2021 protest outside AIB negative because the town was losing banking services or a positive example of an involved community?

And while the memory of individual stories fade, the frequency of headlines associating Travellers and crime with Rathkeale remains. This can be seen when searching for the word “Rathkeale” in Google, Ireland’s most used search engine.

Wikipedia
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rathkeale

Rathkeale

Rathkeale is a town in west County Limerick, in Ireland. It is 30 km (18 mi) southwest of Limerick city on the N21 road to Tralee, County Kerry, and lies on ...
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Is Rathkeale full of Travellers?

What was the violence in Rathkeale?

What is the Irish Travellers organised crime?

What is the history of Rathkeale?

Feedback

About

Rathkeale is a town in west County Limerick, in Ireland. It is 30 km southwest of Limerick city on the N21 road to Tralee, County Kerry, and lies on the River Deel. Rathkeale has a significant Irish Traveller population, and since 1995, almost half the town residents were members of the traveling community. Wikipedia

Weather: 4°C, Wind S at 11 km/h, 88% Humidity [Weather data](#)

Irish Grid Reference: R360420

Population (2016): 1,441

Province: [Munster](#)

Feedback

Travellers and crime define Rathkeale
1/1/24 search for the word “Rathkeale” using Google, the most used search engine in Ireland.

The volume of positive stories can be increased, and they can include Travellers as proactive efforts by Rathkeale Together and David Lamont have shown over recent years. However, community event stories are significantly less attractive to media outlets with an “if it bleeds, it leads” editorial policy.

Bottom line: Strategically, Rathkeale needs to change the narrative by demonstrating that the town is a safe, desirable place to live, shop and invest. It needs to achieve this despite, or because of, its relatively wealthy Traveller population.