

DO: GACH BALL DE CEANTAR CATHRACH PHORT LÁIRGE
TO: EACH MEMBER OF THE METROPOLITAN MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

TUAIRISC ÓN STIÚRTHÓIREACHT COMHSHAOIL
ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE REPORT

SAMHAIN 2022
NOVEMBER 2022

General Environment Enforcement

Environmental Inspectors continue to investigate and monitor illegal waste issues, littering, fly-tipping and illegal signage and issued litter fines where offences are detected.

Members of the public are encouraged to contact the local authority to report all incidents of illegal dumping or littering by using the following telephone number: 0818 102020

Presentation/Parks & Open Spaces

Waterford City

Part of our current work programme is the preparation and planting of our winter bedding whereby planting is used to create both winter and early spring colour in key locations around our city. To date the removal of the summer hanging baskets and planters entering the city via Sallypark has taken place.

Currently winter seasonal planting is taking place at the Thomas Francis Meagher monument; Reginald's Tower; the Folly Roundabout and the planters in John Roberts Square and Apple Market. Within Ballybricken green planting of spring flowering Bellis will follow, which grow over the next months and come spring bring a colourful display. Equally November is nearly upon us and with that, trees are now becoming dormant whereby it will allow us to begin our Tree Programme. It is envisaged that this shall be one of our main work items from now through to next March. Currently we are finalising our work programme to bring us up to early January, while still finalising the remaining part through to March.

Maintenance of our parks shall continue throughout the coming months and shall remain a high priority.

Other works completed:

- Ballybeg playground upgrade completed.
- Ballybricken upgrade to paths completed. Delay for new benches 2 – 3 weeks.
- Railway Square construction works complete. Planting by open spaces to be completed.

Tramore

Staff in Tramore have with the onset of Autumn been involved in works largely associated with the season and preparing for winter. The summer ground summer bedding has served its course and currently this is being removed and in key locations around the centre of the town shall be planted with winter/spring flowering in order to bring some colour in the coming months. Equally ongoing is the removal of the hanging baskets from Main Street and the lower promenade which have come to their end of seasonal display.

Due to Tramore's location on the coast ensures a slightly milder climate whereby grass shall continue to grow later in the season and where ground conditions allow grass requires to be maintained, where at all possible.

Tree Maintenance Programme

The city tree maintenance programme to be carried out by Council staff is circulated with this report. A proposed tree works programme to be completed by contract is being finalised. The programme circulated is based on works carried over from Spring 2022, Public CRMs and requests from Elected Members and have been prioritised following inspection and risk assessment. Some of the work is cyclical in nature and there are a number of items yet to be examined and some of these may be included in the programme following risk assessment. The works will be carried out between now and the end of March 2023. While every effort will be made to complete the programme as set out progress is dependent on a number of factors including weather conditions, complexity of the works on site, continued availability of staff resources and absence of emergency works.

Fountains

The tender process for the improvement works to the fountain in the People's Park has been cancelled as the cost in the tenders received was significantly higher than the budget available. The project is now being divided into two separate contracts, i.e. civil works and fountain improvement works. The tender for the civil works which includes new water and electricity supplies will be issued week commencing 21st November 2022 and revised design for the fountain is being prepared.

We have been unable to locate the sump and recirculation pump on the fountain in John Roberts Square, it's possible that they have been surfaced over. We have contacted the consultants who were involved in the original installation of the fountain and we are awaiting drawings and further details.

Climate Action

Commercial Rates Energy Credit Scheme

Businesses and industry accounts for approximately 41% of county Waterford's carbon emissions. A successful transition to a carbon neutral county and city requires businesses to play their part. With that in mind, the Council put in place an Energy Credit Scheme this year for rate payers. Businesses who attended a short training on energy efficiency and downloaded the information on the energy saving supports available, were eligible to receive a credit on their rates account. The scheme was open to businesses with an annual rates bill of less than €10,000, and all hospitality businesses. 953 businesses participated in the scheme.

Local Climate Action Plan

Draft guidelines have been issued for the formulation of Local Climate Action Plans. The Council will have one year to complete this plan. The Local Climate Action Plan will include Climate Adaptation and the Decarbonisation Zone as chapters. The previous Climate Adaptation Strategy goes to 2023. The Local Climate Action Plan will be a comprehensive roadmap as to how we will achieve emissions reduction across the city and county while preparing for climate impacts. In November we will complete a Climate Change Risk Assessment and Baseline Emissions Inventory.

Climate Adaptation Strategy Report

A progress report on how the Council is meeting the goals set out in the Waterford Climate Adaptation Strategy 2019 – 2023 was sent to the Department of Environment, Climate Action and Communications at the start of this month. The Council has increased the number of actions ongoing to prepare for Climate Change to 78 from 52. These actions have been taken by Roads, Planning, Heritage, Fire Services and HR.

Reduce Your Use Campaign

The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) and the Office of Public Works (OPW) are collaborating on the Reduce Your Use energy efficiency campaign for public bodies. This campaign is now mandatory for public bodies. This campaign aims to reduce the public sector's energy consumption over the winter period by 15% to help combat rising energy costs. The Council has designated November as Reduce Your Use month and will implement the following initiatives:

Heat

- Establish maximum period for heating, air conditioning and all utilities. Switch-off heating and utilities during out of hours periods.
- Requirement for internal space heating temperature of all public buildings to be consistent with the minimum recommended temperatures for heating. In most (though not all) cases, this will be 19 degrees.
- Requirement to shut off all heat in office buildings at least 1-2 hours before the buildings close.

Light

- Requirement not to have external/window/feature display lighting (i.e., non-security/safety lighting) between 5pm and 7pm and to reduce unnecessary lighting at other times.

Time

- Appropriate to hours of public services and hours of work, introduce new operational control conditions. Challenge core and extended hours of business, minimise and lockdown controls outside these hours.
- Reduce electricity use at peak times whenever possible.

Tracking

- Implement own Energy Efficiency Assessment of all buildings as a minimum, plan to undertake an energy audit by external expert – SEAI/OPW can provide template and guidance to complete.
- Introduce an out-of-hours walk-through audit, to be conducted by security, facilities personnel or by other arrangement.
- Facility Teams to conduct own Operations and Maintenance Audit, assuring condition, settings and upkeep of plant. Focus on plant conditions, set-points, control, maintenance, register of opportunity input.
- Facility team to introduce own process for operational control and measurement.

Energy Efficiency

- WCCC have prepared an “Energy Saving Booklet”, for dissemination to 35,000 houses in Waterford. The booklet highlights energy savings that can be made by homeowners and what funding is available for energy upgrades. Booklet is to be circulated between 21st and 28th November.
- WCCC are open to partner with community groups to include buildings within the 2022 “SEAI Better Energy Communities Scheme”. Funding of between 30% is available for businesses and 50% for community projects. Community building upgrades can include insulation, heating system, renewable energy technologies etc. Funded projects in the 2022 application include 1) Knockanore School, 2) Dungarvan Fire Station, 3) Holy Ghost Residential Home, 4) Tramore Library, 5) Deanery Building, 6) Bolton Street Depot, 7) Ardkeen Shopping Centre. Measures included within funded measures include window / Door Upgrades, solar PV, Insulation Upgrades, heat pump upgrades etc.
- WCCC are supporting communities in joining the “Sustainable Energy Communities” initiative, where funding is available through SEAI, for the development of “SEC Master Plans” and funding is available for energy efficiency upgrades and renewable energy installations.

Environmental Education & Awareness

Schools

The Tom Murphy Litter Competition for Secondary Schools was expanded to include all secondary schools in Waterford city and county this year. 15 secondary schools entered the competition and received litter pickers, high visibility vests, gloves and bags to allow them to carry out litter picks of their designated area. Schools are busy carrying out clean ups between now and the end of November, with some schools carrying out 3 clean ups a week with different classes. Judging will take place by an adjudicator from IBAL (Irish Business Against Litter) in the coming weeks. The prizegiving and presentation of certificates of participation will take place in the Mayors Parlour in early December. The following schools in the District took part in the competition: Ardscoil na Mara, Mercy Secondary, School, Mount Sion CBS, Waterpark College, De La Salle College, St Angela’s Presentation College, St Paul’s Community College and Gaelcholaiste Phort Lairge.

The Green Schools Seminar took place online on 5th October. Most teachers found online events to be a convenient way to take part. The Environmental Awareness Officer is available to visit schools to give advice on the programme. Waterford primary schools are participating in Picker Pals litter programme once again this school year. This programme is most suitable for 1st and 2nd class children but has classes participating up to 4th and 5th class also. It teaches about litter and involves activity based learning to promote a keen sense of responsibility for the environment.

A litter workshop was run with Stephen Street Beavers group, focusing on dog fouling. This workshop is offered to any primary school age group.

Waste Prevention

Reuse Month took place during the month of October. The Environment Department created a toolkit for swap events to encourage reuse and repair; this toolkit will provide tips, posters and social media posts to enable

community groups, schools, etc to reuse items by running swap events for items such as sports equipment, clothes, musical instruments, school supplies and more. This is available on the Council website and information has been sent to community groups, schools, sports groups, etc.

The Environment Department hosted a clothes swap at Central Library on 19th October, in conjunction with Europe Direct, alongside a clothing repair demonstration and a fast fashion exhibit on the night also. Approximately 71 people attended the event, each bringing up to 5 items to swap. This equates to a potential 355 pieces of clothing being reused through the event.

The Environment Department held a Repair Demonstration on 11am – 2.00pm on 22nd October in the Coastguard Centre, Tramore in conjunction with the Rediscovery Centre. The Rediscovery Centre is located in the National Centre for the Circular Economy in Dublin. The Repair Demonstration event featured demonstrations of how to repair electrical appliances, textiles, furniture and bicycle repair. Approximately 38 people came with questions and attended the demonstrations to learn how to repair and upcycle their furniture, bikes, textiles and appliances. Our experts were chatting to attendees about repairs throughout this event as well as hosting specific repair demonstrations during the event.

Waste prevention workshops were held in libraries as part of Reuse Month activities. The focus of these workshops varied from a waste prevention workshop focused on making a reusable food wrap that provides a natural alternative to plastic wrap to a Sustainable Living workshop. The workshops provide a forum to discuss reuse, composting and recycling. These workshops took place in libraries in Waterford and Lismore.

Waterford is participating in a pilot reuse project that involves recovering usable fishing equipment from local beach cleans (including beaches from Passage East to Tramore). This involves the local voluntary groups that carry out beach cleans, the fishing industry, Bord Iascaigh Mhara and WCCC. Items such as floats, marker buoys, nets, aquaculture ties, etc can then be collected separately and returned to Dunmore East fishing harbour for reuse or repair. We hope to hold a workshop for community groups that currently carry out beach clean ups shortly.

The Environment Department continues to work with 2GoCup to encourage the use of the deposit return reusable cups at cafes. 10 cafes are taking part in a three month pilot initiative with deposit return reusable cups that cost €1 each (5 cafes along the Greenway and 5 in Waterford). It is hoped that these 10 cafes will then encourage other cafes to accept and move towards reusable cups.

Waterford is taking part in the Commercial Waste Campaign run by the Regional Waste Management Office, a waste audit project was commissioned in small food businesses. As part of this, a waste characterisation is completed, then the commercial waste assets are deployed and a follow up review is done two months later. Each business is also encouraged to give feedback on their experiences. Two businesses in Waterford have agreed to take part in this survey.

Bulky Goods Collection Day

The Bulky Goods Collection Day funded by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications under the Anti-Dumping Initiative 2022 was held at Kilbarry Civic Amenity Site on 22nd October 2022. The following are details of the items collected:

- 103 mattresses
- 20 tonnes bulky furniture

Tidy Towns Results

In late October the results of the Super Valu Tidy Towns Competition for 2022 were announced. Congratulations to all of the Tidy Towns groups in the District who took part in the competition for 2022.

The following was an award winner in the following category:

Category F – Tramore – Silver Medal

Website

Environmental Information continues to be added to the Environment section of the Waterford City & County Council website which can be found at www.waterfordcouncil.ie