Community Climate Action Examples

Community climate action takes a variety of forms, from simple clean-ups to community energy schemes to adaptation measures. There are wonderful examples out there of community projects which reduce or lessen the impact of climate change, and in many cases help their areas to flourish.

This document contains examples of community led climate action projects and includes helpful pointers for communities who might like to do similar projects. They have been broken down under the five programme themes of the Community Climate Action Programme:

1. Community and Energy
2. Travel
3. Food and waste
4. Shopping and recycling
5. Local climate and environmental action

For groups interested in applying for the Community Climate Action Programme, these are only examples, which are by no means prescriptive or exhaustive, and communities are encouraged to be as innovative as possible with their projects, harnessing their local interests and assets. For queries, please contact climateaction@waterfordcouncil.ie.

Theme 1: Community and Energy

Projects of interest under this theme would reduce the climate impact of buildings (incl. lighting) in communities by using less energy, utilising renewable energy and avoiding heat loss.

The Link – Lighting upgrades

Background: The Links is a Multi-Unit Development (MUD) in Portmarnock, Dublin consisting of 287 apartments, divided over 30 blocks and serviced by 46 common-area meter points (MPRNs). The group looked at their energy usage and upgraded their lighting.

Project: An energy audit revealed the majority of the energy being used was for fluorescent lighting and SON lamps in the buildings, street spaces and carpark. 568 lights were upgraded to LEDs. Lighting upgrades were undertaken over a six-month period.

Impact: There was an energy saving of 60% and annual savings of €22,600. Residents were happy with the enhanced brightness and had a greater sense of safety at night-time.

Learn more: https://www.seai.ie/case-studies/the-links-portmarnock/

Cappoquin Community Centre – Floor and cavity insulation, LEDs and Solar PV

Background: Cappoquin Community Centre a large multi-purpose community centre located in County Waterford carried out energy upgrades. The Centre operates a creche, preschool, afterschool, gym, adult education courses, gym, commercial kitchen, meeting rooms, stage, theatre and sports Hall.

Project: Wanting to reduce the Centre's carbon footprint and energy costs, the community group carried out an energy audit of the building and applied for the Communities Energy Grant for works to upgrade lighting, wall and floor cavity insulation and install 15kW of Solar PV. The project cost approximately €36,000.

Impact: They achieved significant energy savings and reduced the carbon footprint of the building. These upgrades saved them up to up to €4,800 per annum on their energy costs and had a simple payback period of 5.2 years.

Learn more: https://southeastenergy.ie/sectors/community-groups/cappoquin-community-centre/

SOS Kilkenny – Building and lighting upgrades

Background: SOS Kilkenny, a not-for-profit organisation who provide services to adults with intellectual disabilities made energy upgrades to their six-building complex in Kilkenny.

Project: In 2016, the organisation replaced their old storage heating system in four of their buildings with a district heating system. In 2018, the internal and external lighting was replaced with LED lighting and the remaining two care buildings were switched from oil heating to gas heating. Roof and wall insulation works were carried out also.

Impact: The upgrades reduced heating and lighting costs by an average of €9,000 per year. Besides the reduction in energy use, emissions and costs, the upgrades improved working and living conditions for all.

Learn more:
https://southeastenergy.ie/sectors/community-groups/sos-kilkenny-heating-and-lighting-upgrade-sos-kilkenny/

Fair Play Café – LED lighting and Solar PV

Background: The Fair Play Café is a community centre in Ringsend, Dublin. After completing an Energy Master Plan through SEAI's Sustainable Energy Communities programme, they decided on a roadmap for their energy efficiency projects.

Project: A range of projects were carried out to improve the energy efficiency of the café and as example to show to their wider community how energy projects could be successfully implemented. Lighting was replaced with energy efficient LEDs, 3 kW Solar PV was installed, and advanced heating controls and a new insulated door were installed.

Impact: The LED lighting saved 21% of total electricity consumption in the café. The solar panels provided 16% of their total energy consumption. The controls and door significantly contributed to the reduction of heat loss and created a more comfortable space. The café saved €1,300 per year on energy costs.

Learn more: https://www.seai.ie/case-studies/the-fair-play-cafe/

💡 Hints/ Things to consider:

Always look first at your building fabric

- When looking at your energy, it is recommended to always first check the fabric of your building – your walls, floor, roof, doors and windows.
- By reducing the amount of heat (energy) escaping, you will reduce the amount of energy your building uses.
- A well-insulated building will have lower running costs, be more comfortable and have better heating efficiency.
- Building upgrades could include changing old windows to double or triple glazed; sealing draughts around doors and windows; and insulating your attic, floors, walls, water tanks and water pipes.

LED Bulbs and light controls

- Lighting can be a big energy user for many organisations.
- LED bulbs and light controls (e.g. daylight and occupancy sensors) are great tools to lower energy usage and emissions.
- LEDs use 85% less electricity than traditional light bulbs and last ten times longer.
- There are different types of LEDs available so chose what is right for your location and needs. For any outdoor lighting consider the impact to local wildlife and reduce unnecessary light pollution where possible.

The energy efficiency of your devices

- It can useful to know how much energy your appliances are using, and which are the biggest energy users.
- Some appliances when left plugged in or switched on, use huge amounts of energy.
- Fast savings could be made by looking at usage and behaviour. For example, spot checks to see what is being left on unnecessarily, installing shower timers and reducing the temperature by 1^0C etc.
- Typically, appliances which are used for heating (e.g. electrical showers) are big energy users. A good mantra to remember is "If it makes things hot, it costs a lot".

Understand your energy with an Energy Audit

- A good way to assess your energy use is to carry out an energy audit. An audit will look at the fabric of the building, how much energy is used in the building, the equipment and processes that use the most energy and ultimately what actions you should take to save energy, including cost and impact.
- An audit typically cost between €1,500-2,000. If your community building has an energy spend of at least €10,000 per year, you may be eligible for SEAI's €2,000 voucher towards the cost of a professional energy audit. Alternatively, you may have the internal expertise within your community to carry out an energy self-assessment.

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Solar PV

- Solar PV is when light from the sun is converted to electricity.
- This is good option for a building when:
  - there is a steady daytime electricity demand
  - a suitable roof top, i.e. south-facing, in good condition and with minimal shading
- Solar PV suits buildings that are busy during the day. It is more energy efficient to use the electricity as its being made when the sun is shining.
- If your building does not have a lot of daytime activity and you are still interested in Solar PV, then you could consider getting battery storage. This means that the electricity made during the day can be stored and used in the evenings or during cloudy times. However, batteries are costly.
- Another option is a hot water immersion diverter. This means the electricity generated is diverted to an electric immersion in your water tank to heat hot water. This is a good option in a building where hot water (e.g. showers) is often used in the evenings.
- No planning permission is required for most rooftop installations.
- You can also export and sell your excess electricity back to the grid but there is a cap on the amount.

Heat Pumps

- Heat pumps work by capturing the heat outside and moving it into the building – even when the weather is cold.
- They can heat both the air and water.
- Heat Pumps are a good option for:
  - new builds or buildings that have excellent insulation and airtightness
  - buildings frequently in use – they are less efficient if only needed for short periods of time.
- Heat pumps are more efficient than most existing systems like gas, oil, solid fuel and direct electrical heating systems.
- There are three types of heat pumps available

1. Air source heat pumps take heat from external air. They are typically the cheapest and easiest to install but are less efficient than other heat pumps in colder weather.

2. Ground source heat pumps takes heat from ground through pipework. They are highly efficient all year round but are more suitable for new builds or buildings with sufficient space around a building.

3. Water source heat pumps take heat from surrounding water (e.g. rivers, streams, lakes). They are highly efficient all year round but would require a water body close by.

Theme 2: Travel

Projects of interest under this theme would contribute to a reduction in travel related emissions.

Collinstown – Bike Hub

Background: South Dublin County Sports Partnership (SDCSP) with support from other groups established the Bike Hub on the grounds of Collinstown Park Community College, Clondalkin.

Project: The Bike Hub is a co-shared amenity with bikes, other equipment and repair facilities. Other initiatives include Learn to Cycle programmes for young people 5-13 years of age, teenager BMX/Trail programmes, primary school cycle safety training, adults community bike rides and more.

Impact: This initiative supports active travel, the circular economy and social inclusion.

Learn more:
https://www.cyclingireland.ie/clubs/cycling-hubs/

San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency and Madrone Art Bar – Cycling parking and street mural
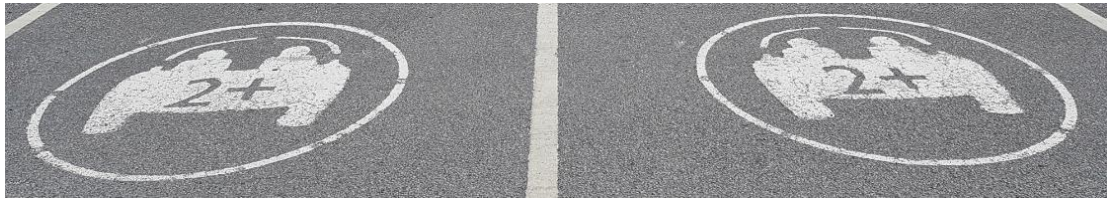
Background: San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) in the USA collaborated with a local business, Madrone Art Bar to install a creative bike corral in front of their premises.

Project: In 2016, the SFMTA repurposed a single vehicle parking space into a functional art piece with parking spots for 12 bicycles. A local artist was commissioned to design the mural underneath the bike corral.

Impact: Encourages active travel and supports community partnerships, local business and art.

Learn more: https://www.sfmta.com/press-releases/san-francisco-unveils-one-kind-mural-asphalt

Callan Community Energy – Community owned solar powered EV charging point

Background: Callan Community Energy is a sustainable energy community in Kilkenny which wanted to install a community EV charging point in the Callan Supervalu carpark.

Project: In 2021, the energy community installed a solar-powered 22 kW EV charging station with 6 kW Solar PV and 20 kW of battery storage to support its residents' transition to electric vehicles. Excess electricity not used for charging is sold to the supermarket.

Impact: It is the first community-owned EV charge point in Ireland and supports the national charging infrastructure. The electricity sales are paid directly to Callan Community Energy.

Learn more:
https://southeastenergy.ie/irelands-first-community-owned-ev-charging-point-callan-community-energy-company/

Maynooth University – Car sharing initiative

Background: Maynooth University is a third level institutions with over over 16,000 students and staff in Kildare which introduced a car sharing initiative.

Project: In 2015 Maynooth University decided to implement a carpooling scheme to reduce parking issues and traffic congestion around the campus. They developed an app which partners compatible people based on their locations and best routes. Incentives to promote the scheme included priority parking for car sharers and a 'Guaranteed Lift Home' policy so all users could be reassured that in cases of emergency they have a lift home.

Impact: By 2018, the number of students carpooling to the campus increased from 7.6% to 11% and staff carpooling rose from 2.5% to 13.2%. The programme improved the awareness of more sustainable ways to travel to the university, reduced single car occupancy and contributed to lowering transport emissions.

Learn more: https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/location/parking-traffic-management/car-sharing

UCD Campus – Cycling parking and bike repair stands

Background: UCD is a third level institutions with over 30,000 students at their Dublin campuses which actively promotes cycling.

Project: To promote people getting to UCD via bicycle they have provided over 4,000 bicycle parking spots, security, lockers and shower facilities. They have also installed 6 self-fix bicycle repair stations which include air pumps to reflate flat types and are equipped with a range of tools for the upkeep of bikes.

Impact: It is estimated that UCD have 7,000 cycle journeys to the campus on an average term day. Their cycle facilities encourage and support cycling. Contributes to lower emissions and better air quality.

Learn more: https://ucdestates.ie/commuting/getting-here/cycling/

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Hints/ Things to consider:

Travel Audits

To get a sense of what it is like to walk to your community space, you could complete the [walkability audit which was developed by the NTA](#).

Alternatively, the [GAA Green Clubs have developed simple surveys and assessments](#) you can do in your community to assess how your community members travel and what it is like to cycle and walk around you area.

Carpooling initiatives

- Carpooling is when two or more people share the journey to the same or nearby destination.
- If every driver carried another driver, there would be 50% fewer cars on the road.
- [Transport for Ireland](#) have developed a guide for setting one up.

Local and national responsibilities for travel

Community groups may be limited as to what travel projects they can carry out on public land. Transport infrastructure and policy falls under the responsibility of local and national government.

Local Authorities are responsible for the management of roads, footpaths, cycles lanes and parking; active travel planning; and developing an EV and Charging Strategy. The NTA (National Transport Authority) is responsible for public transport (bus and rail routes) and the TII (Transport Infrastructure Ireland) is responsible for transport infrastructure (road and rail).

Electric vehicle (EV) charging

There are different charger sizes available:

Small or Home Chargers:
- 3 to 7 kW in size.
- Takes on average 6-8 hours to charge an EV car.
- A single-phase electrical connection is required.
- It is expected that in the future, 80-85% of EV charging would be at home during the night on these types of chargers.

Public Chargers:
- 11 to 22 kW in size.
- Takes on average 3-6 hours to charge an EV car.
- A three-phase electrical connection is required.
- A meaningful top-up for users and would be placed where people would be parked for two hours or more.

Fast/ Rapid Chargers:
- 43 to 150 kW in size.
- Takes on average 30 to 40 mins to charge an EV car.
- These sizes have a high-power requirement so may be unsuitable for some locations.

There are a few questions you should ask when planning to install an electrical vehicle (EV) charger:
- Who will the main users be?
- What is your existing electrical supply and Maximum Import Capacity (MIC)?
- Is there a suitable location close to your electrical distribution? What civil and electrical works are required?
- What payment system and management plan will you have in place after it is installed?
- What legal, grid connections, building, and Health and Safety regulations will you be required to follow?

Theme 3: Food and Waste

Projects of interest under this theme would reduce food waste.

Top of the City – Community Garden

Background: Transformation of derelict space at St Carthage's Avenue, Waterford City into a community allotment and garden.

Project: In 2020 the community garden was rapidly developed due the collaborative effort of volunteers, Waterford City and County Council and local businesses. Works included, establishing 14 raised beds for growing vegetables, ornamental planting sections for biodiversity and pollinators, an ivy wall which feeds and protects local wildlife, composting system, rainwater collection systems, a seed bank, a wooden greenhouse, and a beautiful sheltered stage designed for workshops and summer events.

Impact: Increase in people's knowledge and access to fresh produce, green spaces reduce air pollution, access to compositing facilities, encouragement of healthier lifestyles and building stronger communities. An abandoned site was recovered for use and there was also a reduction in anti-social behaviour in that area.

Learn more: https://www.facebook.com/top.of.the.city.garden/

Kinsalebeg National School and Ballycurrane National School – Wormeries

Background: Clashmore and Kinsalebeg Community Council in County Waterford setup wormeries in two primary schools – Kinsalebeg National School and Ballycurrane National School.
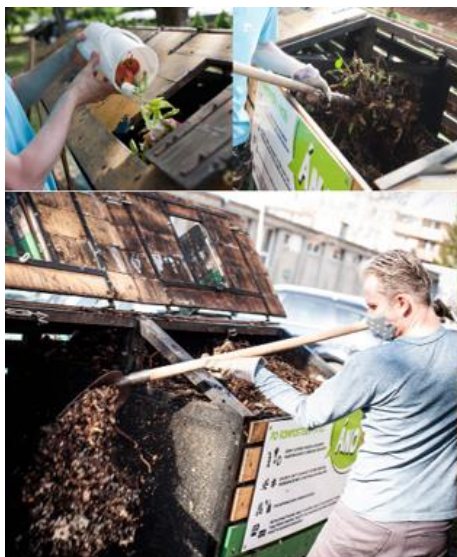
Project: The Community Council held a series of information evenings on food waste and from those events came the idea of setting up wormeries for composting in two of their local primary schools. The wooden weatherproof boxes were made by a member of the community and filled with cardboard, paper, leaves etc. and were interspersed with raw food waste like fruit, bread etc. Over 1000 tiger worms were then introduced to start breaking down the materials and making compost. Training was provided for the students and teachers. Wormeries require little space, materials and maintenance.

Impact: Produces free compost for the schools, decreases the amount of bio-waste being collected, creates an interest amongst the students to learn more about how their environment works, and raises the awareness of more sustainable living choices.

Learn more: https://www.facebook.com/100064689398688/posts/714328344066806/?mibextid=rS40aB7S9Ucbxw6v

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City of Nitra – Urban Community Composting

Background: The Slovakian city of Nitra developed a project for community composting for 50 households. This started as a Bioregio Interreg Europe project to tackle biowaste.

Project: Run by volunteers the project required minimum facilities. The facilities situated in the community consist of a three-chamber composter used in rotation: bio-waste is deposited in one chamber for a year, then it is closed while the waste matures into compost. Then the next chamber is opened and bio-waste is deposited in that one. Each household is given instructions, a bucket and a key to the chambers.

Impact: Produces compost for the community free of charge, decreases the cost of bio-waste collection, raises awareness in the local community about the importance and usefulness of bio-waste. More households signed on and additional composters were started following the initial project.

Learn more: https://www.komunitakompostuje.sk/

St John's Centre College – Rooftop Beehives in the City

Background: St John's Centre College is a further education college in Cork City. On this project they worked with Hive Mind, Cork Healthy Cities and the Cork Food Policy Council to establish rooftop beehives.

Project: In 2019, following a public consultation process, beehives were established on the roof top of St. John's College. Users pay a yearly fee to manage and maintain one of Hive Mind's colonies and keep the honey that is harvested in Autumn. A range of people from students, staff and members of the local community are signed up to the programme. Bees typically forage 4 KM from their hive, so the rooftop bees forage the city centre, parks, gardens, trees and weedy patches around the area. Local homeowners and businesses were asked to plant pollinator friendly plants. Training was provided to those new to beekeeping.

Impact: This project encourages green spaces in cities, an outlet for people and education for others to learn about the importance of bees, their role and how people can maintain their own hive.

Learn more: https://www.irishexaminer.com/news/arid-30960261.html

Creggan Country Park - Community Fridge

Background: Creggan Country Park in Derry is a not-for-profit organisation providing a variety of outdoor pursuits, education facilities and green and blue spaces. They looked at the issue of food waste locally.

Project: Creggan Country Park setup a Community Fridge in 2022 to redistribute surplus food to local people. There are storage, fridge, and freezer facilities. No registration is required, and food is collected and redistributed on the same day. Visitors can go for a walk in the local surroundings, bring along a reusable bag and just take what they want from the fridge and shelves during its opening hours.

Impact: This Community Fridge has distributed over 1-tonne of surplus food to local families and in doing so has resulted in a 4-tonne reduction in carbon dioxide emissions. Community fridges help tackle climate change at a local level as food waste can produce large amounts of greenhouse gases. The facility also encourages knowledge sharing, community building and social inclusion.

Learn more:
https://www.facebook.com/creggan.countrypark.18/

Hints/ Things to consider:

Composting and Wormeries

- Composting facilities and wormeries in community spaces typically do not require planning permission as they are for community use but would need the consent of the residents and/ or landowner.
- A waste licence or permit would be required for larger quantities of waste (incl. animal waste) and for commercial purposes. Community use is typically a resource for reuse within the group rather than waste processing. It is best to check with WCCC to find out if a license is required.
- It is important to check such projects would be covered by your insurance provider.

Allotments and Gardens

- Allotments are plots of land rented to individuals/ families, while a community garden is worked on by all members of the community together.
- They can be set up on private or public land. Planning permission is often required, so it is best to contact the Planning Department in WCCC to check.
- Community Gardens Ireland have a useful design and implementation guide for community gardens and allotments which contains some excellent advice on a number of topics for every community group such as how to set up allotments and gardens, where to get advice, designing for full access for all, polytunnel advice, biodiversity and green recycling.

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Community Fridge

Community fridges need to comply with relevant food safety and food hygiene legislation. In some cases, groups may be required to register as a food business with their local environmental health office.

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Available resources

- [My Waste have a Food Waste Campaign Toolkit](#) and other resources available on their website for individuals, businesses and community groups.

- FoodCloud is an Irish social enterprise which rescues and redistributes surplus food from shops and businesses. They have a [Community Foodlink network](#) which maps organisations around the country assisting people who need help with accessing food.

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Theme 4: Shopping and Recycling

Projects of interest under this theme would promote the reduction, reuse and repair of materials, and increase the number of recycling facilities.

Carrickmacross Toy Library - Community resource sharing

Background: The not-for-profit initiative in Monaghan aims to address the environmental challenge around children's toys through a sustainable toy lending service.

Project: The Toy Library promotes play for children aged 0-6 by enabling families to borrow, not buy quality, sustainably sourced toys. Users can borrow up to four toys, puzzles or games for up to three weeks at a time. Parents pay a small membership fee that goes towards repairing or replacing broken toys.

Impact: This project encourages resource sharing, reduces waste and promotes the circular economy. 80% of children's toys end up in landfill or in the sea after being used for an average of six months. Toys are difficult to recycle as they can contain materials that cannot be easily separated.

Learn more: https://carrickmacrosstoylibrary.lend-engine.com/

Not available   € 0.00 for 21 days
Betsy the Cow Animal Hopper

Available   € 0.00 for 21 days
Bounce and Spin Zebra

Available   € 0.00 for 21 days
Kurve Wooden Balance Bike

On loan   € 0.00 for 21 days
Light n' Sound Minnie

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Renew – Recycled paint

Background: Renew, a social enterprise in Waterford City provides bike repairs, paint recycling and upcycled furniture.

Project: The organisation collects used water-based paints from local civic amenity sites and repurposes the paint so it can be used again. The paint is filtered, remixed and a range of colours are then available. Interior and exterior wall paint is available for purchase.

Impact: Diverts reusable paint from disposal and provides affordable paint for reuse by the public and community organisations. This promotes the circular economy locally.

Learn more: https://waterford-news.ie/2023/09/01/waterfords-renew-enterprises-adds-life-purpose-to-repurposing/

VOICE Ireland – Cloth Nappy Incentive Scheme

Background: In 2022, VOICE Ireland an environmental charity partnered with three Dublin Local Authorities and the EPA to reduce disposable nappy waste in Ireland.

Project: VOICE ran a pilot programme for 70 families to get a cloth nappy starter kit. Families could choose from a selection of bundles, but most starter kit bundles included ten birth to potty nappies, nappy inserts, a pack of reusable wipes and a wet bag. The programme was very popular, and spaces were filled quickly. This programme addressed the upfront cost of purchasing cloth nappies which can deter many families. A challenge with reusable nappies can be tackling the mental barrier and preconceptions of cloth nappies. In 2023, the programme was rolled out across more counties.

Impact: Reusable nappies reduce the amount of single use plastic waste, have lower emissions than disposable nappies, promote the circular economy and can be less costly than disposable nappies for families.

Learn more: https://www.voiceireland.org/cloth-nappy-incentive-scheme

Sew Last Season – Social Sewing Space

Background: Sew Last Season was set up by Helen Garvey, a Fashion and Textile Designer. The Galway city initiative is used for upcycling and embellishment of preloved clothes.

Project: Sew Last Season is a public sewing room located in Ozanam House, St Augustine Street, which was set up to teach people how to sew, mend and upcycle. They are supported by St Vincent de Paul who provides the workspace and materials.

Impact: Reduces fast fashion, textile waste and promotes the circular economy, giving people the skills to prolong the life of their clothes.

Learn more: http://www.sewlastseason.com/

Waterpark RFC – Training Gear Exchange

Background: Waterpark Rugby Football Club is a Rugby Union club in Waterford. They have roughly 600 members – adults and children – and wanted to reduce the waste of good quality sports gear.

Project: In 2022, the Club became aware that some children were out growing their boots and clothes quite quickly, but these items were still in very good condition. They started collecting the unused gear so other members could use it. They started the initiative to prevent waste but also to alleviate families experiencing additional growing household costs. The only cost in setting up the initiative was the €30 for the collection boxes. There has been very positive feedback from parents.

Impact: 20 to 25 families have gotten involved in the project and the Club estimate that so far, the small initiative has saved families an estimated €500. This project reduces waste and promotes the circular economy.

Learn more:
https://www.facebook.com/WaterfordCityRugbyClub/

THE BOOT EXCHANGE

Do you have boots that have been outgrown and are still in good condition. Drop them into the boot box.

The process is:
- Donate your old boots in the boot box
- Boots must be in good, clean and dry condition
- Take a pair if you find your size
- Make a small donation to the club if possible

Hints/ Things to consider:

Waste Collection Permits

- If a community group is planning on collecting waste as part of a circular economy project, they may need a waste collection permit. There are exemptions depending on the type of group and waste.
- It is best to check with WCCC to find out if a permit is required.

Zero Waste Communities

VOICE Ireland and Zero Waste Cashel have a useful guide available for communities who want to become zero waste. It contains advice on a number of topics such as understanding waste in your community, people's mindsets, developing a waste masterplan and communication strategies.

Available resources

WCCC have a number of resources available around waste management, including free resources (posters, guides etc.) for setting up a swap shop in your community.

My Waste have a useful and searchable database explaining how and where to dispose of many different types of waste.

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Theme 5: Local climate and environmental action

Projects of interest under this theme would take a holistic approach to positively managing the local environment, including in relation to climate action.

Stoneybatter Rain Garden Project, Dublin – Rainwater planters for urban runoff

Background: Bí Urban, a social enterprise in Dublin develop a nature-based solution for urban runoff called the NatureRx Rain Garden Pilot. These projects use rain gardens to deal with urban runoff which is run off from rainwater when there is more water than the ground can absorb.

Project: 10 Dublin city centre homes took part in the pilot project which saw rain planters built to fit neatly into the available space adjacent to their downpipes. Rain that would have typically flown from the roof down into the drain, instead flowed into the rain planters. Plants which could adapt to damp and dry periods were selected to create a self-sustaining, maintenance free growing space. Rain planters are low cost to make and install.

Impact: They make use of rainwater; reduce overflow of sewer water into rivers during heavy rainfall which can potentially reduce pollutants entering our waterways; provide habitats for pollinators; reconnect people to nature; and create attractive garden features.

Learn more: https://www.biurban.ie/rain-garden-project
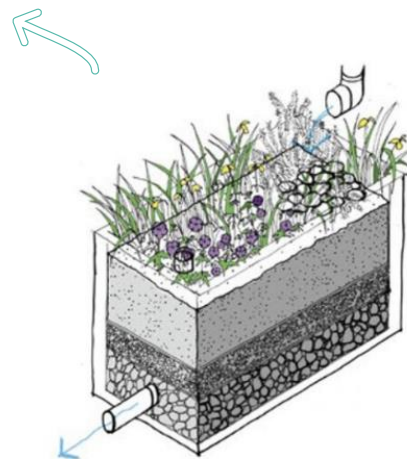
Monaghan Tidy Towns - Dispersed Urban Orchard (DUO)

Background: Monaghan Tidy Towns has been working on the biodiversity of their area since 2010 with works including a habitat survey, maintaining a 4 KM wildlife corridor along the Ulster Canal Greenway, identification of key habitat spaces for bees, planting pollinator-attractive plants etc.

Project: Their 2014-15 DUO project created routes for bees between their key habitat spaces and Greenway. The routes were mainly made up of residential housing, so they provided fruit trees for the local residences along these routes to plant in their gardens, thereby creating routes for pollinators to travel. Uptake was hugely popular among the community.

Impact: In 2016 Monaghan Tidy Towns won the Local Authority Pollinator Award. Their overall work has increased biodiversity, made public and private land more pollinator friendly, encouraged community engagement in the local environment and reconnection with nature.

Learn more: https://pollinators.ie/monaghans-dispersed-urban-orchard-for-pollinators/

Ripple Project in Ballina - Creation of green spaces and water resilience

Background: Greenhills Estate in Ballina, Mayo took part in the Ripple project. The aim of the project was to understand, map and record the local community's experience, perspectives, and knowledge about their housing estate's green spaces, in relation to water and climate change.

Project: Following a series of workshops, residents shared their insights, aspirations and hopes for their neighbourhood. They designed a number of projects to improve the movement of water, biodiversity, and amenity value of parts of the estate. In 2023, they voted to create a garden in a neglected part of the estate. The garden includes raised vegetable beds, a mini orchard of heritage apple trees, seating from upcycled old logs, native pollinator plants, and a tree nursery. Water is also directed into a rain garden. The project was positively received by the community because of the collaborative workshops at the beginning; voting on the winning design and the works being completed within 12 months.

Impact: The collection of water slows the flow of heavy rain and allows rain tolerant planting to absorb some of the water. The project made a typically marshy area during wet weather usable again. The communal raised beds and orchard provide an opportunity for residents to access fresh produce. The garden has become a climate resilient and positive space for residents and wildlife.

Learn more: https://www.creativeireland.gov.ie/app/uploads/2023/03/Creative-Climate-Action-Ripple.pdf

Hollyhill Library - Seed Library

Background: Hollyhill Library is a public library in Cork City which worked on a project with Green Spaces for Health and the Cork Food Policy Council.

Project: In 2022, a seed library was set up in Hollyhill Library with seeds from the Skibbereen Brown Seed Envelope Company. From the library, people can borrow fruit, vegetable and flower seeds, plant their crops and when plants begin to sprout their own seeds they can be harvested and returned to the library for the next person. The library's motto is "Borrow, Sow, and Return". Seeds are stored in a repurposed old card index cabinet. Heritage seeds and those suitable for the Cork climate are available for users also.

Impact: This initiative provides resources for community members to grow locally produced food, supports local gardeners and knowledge sharing and promotes biodiversity.

Learn more:
https://www.echolive.ie/corknews/arid-40971065.html

Comhairle Cathrach & Contae Phort Láirge
Waterford City & County Council

Climate Action
A Smarter, Greener Waterford

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland
Tionscadal Éireann
Project Ireland 2040

ReWild Wicklow - Wicklow Uplands Peatland Restoration

Background: ReWild Wicklow a voluntary environmental organisation, in collaboration with National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) rangers carried out a peatland restoration trial project on a small area of degraded peatland on the Barnacullian Ridge in the Wicklow Mountains.

Project: In 2022, volunteers helped the rangers spread heather mulch, grass seed and fertiliser, build over 100 small timber dams and erect sheep fencing around the project site. This trial proved very successful with considerable areas revegetating and the dams successfully slowing the runoff of water, creating pools and stopping the runoff of peat. This project was funded through Local Authorities Water Programme. The peatland restoration will ultimately reduce the runoff of peat into the rivers at their source, thereby improving the quality of the water for drinking, agriculture and wildlife to exist in it.

Impact: With the success and enthusiasm from the volunteers, the group hope to expand on this project. This project has benefits for water quality, climate change mitigation and biodiversity. Restored peatlands are also one of the most effective carbon sinks for tackling emissions.

Learn more: https://rewildwicklow.ie/projects/peatland-restoration

Hints/ Things to consider:

Pollinator/ Biodiversity projects

- There are many well-meaning but sometimes ineffective pollinator projects. Groups should consult the advice provided on the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan website and their specific resources available for Community Groups and Sports Clubs, which cover everything from managing and planting hedgerows, increasing the diversity of native plants, mowing guidelines, signage etc.

- Plant selection, management and signage are important elements to consider in pollinator/ biodiversity projects.

Water Quality and Conservation Audit

- To get a better understanding of your water use, potential sources of pollution and opportunities for water conservation, you could carry out a local assessment.
- There are examples of simple water audits you can carry out available on the GAA Green Clubs website.

Water Management

- Coastal, pluvial (when the ground is saturated) and fluvial (river) flooding are likely to increase with worsening climate change.
- There are ways to reduce the risk of flooding and lessen the impact on waterways and biodiversity. For example, water harvesting, creating buffer zones around rivers or water courses with plants and trees, creating rain gardens and using porous paving so more rainwater can penetrate into the ground.
- There is specific advice available for community groups including project examples available on the Local Authority Waters Programme website.