



**Comhairle Cathrach
& Contae Phort Láirge**
Waterford
City & County Council

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

TUAIRISC ÓN STIÚRTHÓIREACHT COMHSHAOIL
ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE REPORT

AIBREÁN 2021
APRIL 2021

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: 0761 10 20 20

Presentation / Parks & Open Spaces

Waterford City & Tramore

Due to Covid-19 - Level 5 restrictions currently in place our work programmes have been tailored to ensure that both staff and the public remain safe. In Waterford & Tramore work on the maintenance of our parks is ongoing including the maintenance of litter bins and litter picking providing the public with a safe and clean space to avail of for recreation. With the arrival of Spring the frequency of grass maintenance is increasing. This work can be completed within the Covid-19 guidelines. The improved weather has seen increased number of visitors to our parks.

Spring has also brought the requirement to control unnecessary weed growth and this year Waterford City & Council has commenced the use of a non-selective contact herbicide as part of its natural weed management solution for our Parks. This herbicide is a natural substance extracted from plants common in nature. It has an innovative formulation and acts through contact, ensuring effectiveness by causing dehydration in the weed to which it is applied. This initiative is part of our sustainable management strategy with regards to weed control and helps us become less dependent on traditional weed control products. This method of weed control which was trialled in our city parks last year with great success will continue to be used.

Climate Change

The recently announced [Climate Action and Low Carbon Development \(Amendment\) Bill 2021](#) sets Ireland on the road to net zero emissions by 2050. The Climate Bill makes the Government legally accountable for this target. This means a huge step up in climate ambition – cutting emissions in half over the next decade on the path to net zero.

The 2021 Climate Action Plan will be a roadmap for getting to net zero. As part of the development of the 2021 Climate Action Plan the views of citizens and communities are invited on how Ireland can be transformed and

support given to people who want to take their own climate actions. Further information can be obtained here: <https://climateconversations.citizenspace.com/decc/climateactionplan2021/>

The closing date for submissions is the 18th May 2021.

Environmental Education & Awareness

Litter prevention

Waterford City & County Council continues to offer assistance throughout the year to the general public, community groups and schools to clean up litter and illegally dumped waste from their local environs e.g. approach roads, local beauty spots, beaches and general public areas. These clean ups are ongoing. There has been an increase in the number of individuals & individual households carrying out clean-ups within their 5km limit at present, when groups cannot meet to carry out larger scale clean-ups as usual.

Anti-Dog Fouling Campaign

The regional dog fouling campaign was launched on 22nd March. A press release was issued to coincide with this, along with radio ads on WLR FM, social media posts and newspaper ads. This campaign will run throughout the remainder of 2021.

Biodiversity Events

A five week Sustainable Gardening course is currently running. There was great interest in this; we had over 3 times more applicants than places on the course. Tidy Towns, community groups and community gardens were prioritised for places. Feedback has been excellent to date. This project aims to enable community groups to effectively improve their area for wildlife, increase pride of place and reduce pollution. By teaching a practical class on how to take cuttings, how to identify what creatures live in your area and what plants most benefit wildlife to community leaders we can enable them to improve local areas with a limited budget. Participants learn why they should protect the environment, how to protect it and who to turn to for support in doing so.

Let Dandelions Bee – this campaign encourages leaving dandelions grow during March and April, instead of mowing them and is in line with the All Ireland Pollinator Plan. This provides early pollinators such as bees with an early source of food. This is of great importance to pollinators and is a simple action that we can all take. A competition is being run during March and April to take a photo of your dandelions in bloom and photos can be emailed to letdandelionsbee@gmail.com. Signs are also being put in place on grassy verges to highlight that the grass is being left uncut to help pollinators such as bees.

National Tree Week – this took place slightly later this year from 21st – 27th March. Under normal circumstances, National Tree Week brings about the opportunity to promote tree awareness. Communities, associations, workgroups and family groups get together and organise lots of tree planting events, making Ireland greener. This year, with Covid-19, things were different. We are mindful of government guidelines surrounding gatherings and so virtual events were held. These were available through the Tree Council's website and we hosted a talk on choosing and planting the right tree for the right place on the 23rd March. A number of saplings were made available to groups who had been allocated saplings in 2020 but were unable to access them due to Covid-19 restrictions, etc.

Tidy Towns

The national Tidy Towns competition will go ahead this year, with groups encouraged to include relevant photographs wherever possible with their entries in case judging cannot take place in person due to COVID-19. Groups have also been encouraged to focus on biodiversity, green spaces and sustainable living. With this in mind, a webinar on how to write an application will be held for Tidy Towns groups on 13th April at 7.00 p.m.. This webinar will include a talk by Consultant Ecologist, Botanist and National Tidy Towns Adjudicator Fiona MacGowan, on how to write the application to gain marks when an adjudicator cannot visit as well as tips for how to include photographs as evidence of work completed.

Invitations have been emailed to all Tidy Towns groups for these events and the event has been advertised on the Councils website and social media as well as through the PPN, however registrations have been slow. It is important that Tidy Towns groups attend this event. It would be greatly appreciated if any local Tidy Towns groups in your area could be notified of the importance of this workshop; at a workshop on 22nd March, not all groups were aware that judges will not be able to visit their town/village this year or that the application must be submitted digitally this year.

A webinar on Sustainability & Sustainable Development Goals was held on 22nd March, with excellent attendance. Tidy Towns Adjudicator Debbie Reynolds provided advice and examples on projects, as well as introducing the new Sustainable Development Goals element of the competition to groups.

Climate Change For Those Under 16

Waterford City & County Council have recently been working with members of Comhairle na nOg on local climate change conversations. As part of achieving the goals of a Carbon neutral society by 2050, the Government of Ireland has established a National dialogue on Climate action. As part of this dialogue, in 2021 a series of interlinked Climate conversations are being piloted to feed directly into the Climate Action Plan 2021 and the wider enduring National process. Young people can feed into the conversations in a number of ways- the broad online climate conversations which is about their own individual views on climate change or via the local Comhairle Conversations. The local Comhairle conversations are focused on local climate change issues, and how to encourage behaviour change to address these. We will meet (virtually) with members of Comhairle to discuss what they are doing in their own communities or homes and gather their suggestions on how to encourage new behaviours at a local level- focusing on areas where they can have an impact- travel, home, shopping and recycling, food and environment.

Green Schools

This year, Green Schools assessments are taking place online, in accordance with An Taisce's recommendations. Green School Committees will continue to be engaged with via Zoom. However due to the extended closure of schools, engagement has understandably been much lower than usual for this time of the year. An Taisce has extended the assessment deadline until the end of the school year to reflect this nationwide trend.

In an effort to continue to engage with schools, workshops are being offered online. Many teachers have expressed a preference for pre-recorded video content for workshops (due to internet connection, difficulty in scheduling anything live with a class at present, etc.) and so this content is being worked on in order to offer this option to schools also. Secondary schools are beginning to engage once again via online talks.

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