



**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

MÁRTA 2021
MARCH 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

Covid-19 - Level 5 restrictions currently in place have resulted in restricting a large part of the work programme including work on tree pruning, tree planting and shrubbery maintenance. Some elements of our tree works programme have been re-scheduled to take place in the Autumn, being the next most appropriate season for the pruning and planting of trees. Essential work associated with the maintenance of our parks continues, that being litter bins maintenance and litter picking as these are essential in providing the public with a safe and clean space for recreation.

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-Graffiti and Anti-Litter Awareness Grant Scheme 2021

Waterford City & County Council are currently inviting submissions for the Anti-Graffiti and Anti-Litter Awareness Grant Scheme 2021 from community groups, youth groups, schools or other community development organisations, based in County Waterford, who are interested in receiving funding for initiatives regarding litter or graffiti. The main themes for projects this year will be to tackle dog fouling and roadside litter. Applications for projects under these themes will be prioritised for funding. Closing date for completed applications is 5pm 18th March 2021. Application and further details can be found on <http://bit.ly/AntiLitterGrant2021>

Waste Prevention Grant Scheme 2021

The local Waste Prevention Grant Scheme 2021 has also been advertised with a closing date of 25th March 2021 and applications can be made at <http://bit.ly/WastePreventionGrant2021> .

Both of these grants have been advertised on social media, the Council's website, in local newspapers and also through the PPN.

Anti-Dog Fouling Campaign

Work continues on the regional anti-dog fouling campaign with a launch date of 18th March. In the meantime applications for the Green Dog Walker programme have been re-opened. This programme encourages dog owners to take the Green Dog Walker pledge. The Green Dog Walker scheme is a positive and pro-active way to encourage and support responsible dog ownership in Waterford. It aims to increase awareness of the problem of dog fouling which is among the most common forms of littering. When you sign up to the scheme we will send you a complimentary Green Dog-Walkers high-vis vest/armband and a 'doggie bone' poop-bag dispenser with a roll of bags. By signing up you have 'Taken the Pledge' to always clean up after your dog, to carry extra doggie bags and to gladly give others a bag for their dog if they ask for one. By wearing the high-vis vest you are indicating that you are a responsible dog-owner participating in and supporting the scheme. Over 500 Green Dog Walker pledges have been received to date in 2021.

Biodiversity Events

In conjunction with Waterford Libraries and Europe Direct Waterford, we worked on a weeklong series of online events about biodiversity during the week 22nd – 26th February. The focus was on nature in the garden and what individuals can do to encourage biodiversity. From tips to help biodiversity on your doorstep to a competition for children, promoting plants for pollinators and looking at garden birds, it covered a range of topics suitable for biodiversity at home. All online events were recorded and made available for viewing online afterwards also. A webinar titled '*Bees, Birds & Trees - Biodiversity and Waterford Council*' was held in which a presentation was delivered by Ms. Ella Ryan highlighting the efforts to support and promote biodiversity in the management of our Parks & Open Spaces. This event was well supported with over 100 people registering for the webinar which provided the public with information with regard to Waterford City & County Council's partnership with the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan. Due to the great interest in this event the possibility of providing a similar event later in the year is being examined.

Sustainable Gardening Course

A Sustainable Gardening course will commence in mid-March (dates to be advertised for applications shortly). Tidy Towns, community groups and community gardens will be prioritised and places will be limited. This will be advertised on-line and directly to these groups also.

Let Dandelions Bee

The "Let Dandelions Bee" campaign encourages the public to leave dandelions grow during March and April, instead of mowing them. This activity is in line with the aims of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan. By leaving Dandelions grow during March & April early pollinators such as bees are provided 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

National Tree Week

This year's National Tree Week takes place slightly later this year from 21st – 27th March. Under normal circumstances, National Tree Week brings about the opportunity to promote tree awareness by engaging with communities, associations, workgroups and family groups get together and organise lots of tree planting events, making Ireland greener. This year we are mindful of Government restrictions to limit the spread of Covid-19 and accordingly only virtual events are being held to mark National Tree Week. Limited supplies of saplings have been allocated to Waterford City & County Council and these will be distributed to groups who had been allocated saplings in 2020 but were unable to avail of the saplings 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 about planting for biodiversity was held for Tidy Towns groups on 10th February. This webinar included a talk by Consultant Ecologist, Botanist and National Tidy Towns Adjudicator Ms. Fiona MacGowan. It focused primarily on practical ways to enhance biodiversity locally. The webinar was well attended, with 29 attendees on the night. It provided numerous helpful tips and advice on the topic, as well as having a lively Questions and Answers session to finish. A copy of the presentation was sent to all participants afterwards. It also promoted gardening without the use of chemicals and 120 copies of our Greener Gardening guide were sent to various Tidy Towns groups for distribution to their local community following this webinar.

Two further on-line workshops have been organised for Tidy Towns groups following the success of this webinar; these will cover the topics of Sustainability & Sustainable Development Goals on 22nd March and also Tidy Towns Application Form Completion on 13th April (this will be especially important as the first round of judging will take place entirely based on applications this year). Invitations have been sent to all Tidy Towns groups for these events.

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