

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

TUAIRISC ÓN STIÚRTHÓIREACHT COMHSHAOIL
ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE REPORT

DEIREADH FÓMHAIR 2022
OCTOBER 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

Waterford City & County Council has retained Green Flag Award status for two outstanding amenities in Waterford City and County. Kilbarry Nature Park and the Waterford Greenway became fitting winners of the An Taisce Green Flag Award for parks and green spaces. The announcement was made on the 14th September 2022. The Green Flag Award scheme is an international mark of quality which recognises the efforts of local community engagement with green space involvement. The staff of Parks & Open Spaces is tasked with the everyday care and maintenance of Kilbarry Nature Park, thus ensuring the park is managed to high standards a key element in the overall principles of the Green Flag for Parks. This award is recognition of their commitment to Kilbarry Nature Park and the amenity it offers to the people of Waterford.

We introduced several additional wildflower meadows across the city in 2021 and maintained these for the current season. These have now been cut and this grass vegetation removed by a local farmer where for the current year we had set aside some 6.3Ha in relation to this Biodiversity initiative.

Within the last two weeks staff of Parks & Open Spaces have been involved in the creation of the biodiversity garden on the open space beside the City Wall between the Theatre Royal and Bishop's Palace. The Theatre Royal in conjunction with WCCC as partner were successful in securing funding for the project under the ESB Brighter Future Arts Fund. The primary aim of the project is biodiversity and climate change awareness. Centre to this has been the introduction of a prominent sculpture underplanted with a sedum carpet where this garden segment is flanked with a border containing planting supporting urban biodiversity. The garden was officially opened by the Mayor on Friday 23rd September.

The summer has now come to a close and staff are presently in the process of removing and taking down our hanging baskets, this is a sign Autumn is upon us where in the next number of weeks we shall be finalising our Tree Works Programme with an indicated start for early November.

Other Works:

- Railway Square – Pocket Garden. Civil works completed. Planting to take place in coming weeks.
- Ballybricken Green – Works to upgrade Ballybricken green footpaths and associated works. Civil works started started 5th September. Green to be fully open by end of October.
- 6 acres Faronshoneen Park – Existing goal posts removed, area reseeded, allowing a few weeks for grass to

take before installing new goal posts and enlarging pitch size.

- Kilbarry Nature Park – Darkness into light wooden sculpture by John Hayes erected in nature park. Works completed.
- Tree crown lifting ongoing at various areas around city.
- Arbor resin surface to be installed to area in Arundel Square outside Wetherspoons. Works completed.
- Ballybeg Park upgraded playground equipment. Works to be completed by October 2022.
- Inclusive wheelchair swing. Peoples Park inclusive wheelchair swing to be installed by November 2022.
- Peoples Park Exercise Equipment – Works completed September 2022.

Tramore

In recent weeks the wildflower meadows around the town of Tramore have been cut as part of our maintenance programme, this is necessary to ensure they remain viable and producing where they are required to be cut in autumn, this shall allow for re-growth next spring and a new flourish of flowering species. The areas cut have been around the boating lake, within the industrial estate and areas along by Somerville and estuary road. Again, we worked with a local farmer who would have cut these areas and subsequently baled where these bales will provide this farmer with additional fodder over the winter months.

Staff are currently in the process of cutting partial areas on the upper part of the Tramore Nature Park in order to maintain its contribution to biodiversity. These pockets shall be cut on annual rotational basis thus allowing an element of permanent cover here also. The cutting and lifting of the vegetation shall ensure a flourish of new growth next spring whilst the remaining uncut areas will continue to provide cover over the winter months.

In the next short while the hanging baskets shall be removed from the street poles where they have now come to their end of useful life, alongside the cutting back in advance of winter of our herbaceous planting positioned in many other beds around the town.

Update from Waterford Energy Bureau

- The launch of the “South East Energy Agency” took place on the 30th September. SEEA is a non for profit regional Energy Agency, committed to supporting every energy user in using energy more efficiently, monitoring energy use and towards a greater choice of renewable energy sources. Working in Partnership, raising awareness, providing support, and delivering low carbon in the region.
- WCCC are open to partnering with community groups to include buildings within the 2022/2023 “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 that have received funding under the 2022 application include 1) Holy Ghost Residential Home, 2) Tramore Library, 3) Deanery Building, 4) Bolton Street Depot, 5) Ardkeen Shopping Centre,
- WCCC has submitted an initial expression of interest to the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government for Waterford city to be a decarbonised city by 2040. Currently Waterford City emits approximately 400,000 tonnes CO2 per year.
- The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, has launched a “Support Scheme for Renewable Heat” (SSRH). This scheme includes grant funding for air-source heat pumps for businesses and farmers and tariff payment for biomass boilers, biomass / anaerobic digestion CHP’s and anaerobic digestion boilers. The SSRH scheme is operated by SEAI and open to applications.
- A draft “WCCC Electrical Vehicle and Charging Strategy”, has been prepared for approval of WCCC Management and details a phased transition of WCCC vehicles to EV’s with appropriate charging infrastructure being installed where operationally feasible by 2025. It is projected that up to 30% - 40% of WCCC vehicles could be EV’s by 2025.
- 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. To date Tramore SEC have developed a developed a master plan.
- The stadium lights are to be replaced at the WRSC and will be completed by December 2022. A contractor has been appointed and initial design work has begun. Upgrade works are funded by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.
- An order has been placed for the purchased of three electric vans for the WCCC environmental inspectors. These vans should be delivered by late 2022 and will replace the existing diesel vans.

Climate Action

Commercial Rates Energy Credit Scheme

Businesses and industry account 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 Waterford City & County Council has 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. The original closing date was 30th September at 6.00pm however some businesses had difficulty accessing the site so an extension was given until 7th October. In total 953 businesses completed the training. This compares favourably with other campaigns to engage with businesses.

Local Climate Action Plan

Guidance has been published for 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.

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 is being sent to the Department of the Environment, Climate Action and Communications.

Reduce Your Use Campaign

Waterford City & County Council will participate in the Government's Reduce Your Use campaign with a goal of reducing energy use by 15% this winter. Council staff will be encouraged to complete several actions each month and to be mindful of energy use. This is a competition with the winning department being announced in the Spring.

Environmental Education & Awareness

Waste Prevention

Reuse Month takes place during the month of October. The Environment Department are launching 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 run swap events for items such as sports equipment, clothes, musical instruments, school supplies and more. Waterford City & County Council are also hosting a clothes swap at Central Library on 19th October, with a Repair demonstration and fast fashion exhibit on the night also.

Waterford City & County Council have been chosen for the Reuse Month Flagship event 2022, a Repair Café to be held on 22nd October. This event will feature experts in textiles, furniture and bicycle repair demonstrating practical examples of repair. Waste prevention workshops will be held in libraries for Reuse Month. The focus of these workshops is making a reusable food wrap that provides a natural alternative to plastic wrap. These wraps are a great way to start out on your waste reduction journey and offer an easy switch from plastic. Each participant can make their own wrap to take home with them and are encouraged to bring along any other waste prevention or recycling questions they might have. The workshop provides a forum to discuss reuse, composting and recycling as the wraps are being made. These workshops will take place in Waterford city centre, Ardkeen, Tramore and Kilmacthomas. A sustainable living workshop will also take place in Lismore, incorporating Greener Cleaning (environmentally friendly cleaning in the home, how to reduce the use of chemicals and hazardous materials), Greener Gardening, Composting, food waste prevention and waste prevention tips.

Waterford is participating a pilot reuse project that involves recovering usable fishing equipment from local beach cleans (including beaches from Passage East to Tramore). It will involve local communities, the fishing industry, Bord Iascaigh Mhara and WCCC. Items such as floats, marker buoys, nets, aquaculture ties, etc can be collected separately and will be 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.

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.

Greening the Vitamin Sea Festival: Two rinse stations were trialled to encourage the use of reusable cups, cutlery, plates, etc at the Vitamin Sea festival in Tramore, 16th – 18th September. These stations allowed attendees to bring their own reusable cutlery, plates, cups, etc and rinse them out for reuse at the festival. This was particularly useful at the food trail and picnic elements of the festival. The rinse stations were being made by a local social enterprise, Renew Enterprises, with some of the materials being repurposed for reuse in the stations e.g. wood from pallets, reused sinks, etc. These two rinse stations received good feedback and usage. It is hoped that this trial will enable the rinse stations to be expanded for use at other festivals in 2023.

VOICE were invited to bring their Return For Change roadshow to Tramore for the Vitamin Sea Festival also on 17th September. Members of the public were engaged with to demonstrate how the reverse vending machines and the deposit return scheme will work when introduced to Ireland in the coming months. 15 tonnes of waste electrical and electronic equipment was collected at Tramore on 17th September at the WEEE Ireland collection day.

The Environment Department continue 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.

Schools

Waterford City & County Council have expanded the Tom Murphy Litter Competition for secondary schools. All secondary schools in Waterford city and county were eligible to enter the competition this year. 15 secondary schools entered the competition and entrants will receive litter pickers, high visibility vests, gloves and bags to enable them to carry out litter picks of their designated area. These clean ups will take place during October and November. Judging will take place by an adjudicator from IBAL (Irish Business Against Litter). The prizegiving and presentation of certificates of participation will take place in the Mayors Parlour in early December.

The Green Schools Seminar will be online on 5th October as the majority of teachers found this to be a convenient way to take part. The Environmental Awareness Officer will be available to visit schools or answer any questions that they might have, as will An Taisce's Green Schools team. The Council is working with a further four schools and the Waterford Teachers Centre to continue the Climate Literacy programme with secondary schools this autumn. This is a 10- week Climate Literacy programme, focused on improving climate literacy and fostering behavior change in schools. The course is developed to include teacher training, resources, and lesson plans. The teacher training is designed to equip teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and skills required to effectively and confidently deliver not only this course, but also across their curriculum subject as the course can complement any subject framework that has an environmental strand. After the training the teachers will then be able to deliver the course with as many groups of students as they wish. An in-person teacher training day will be held on 22nd August, with further online sessions taking place during September.

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.

Community Clean-Ups

Waterford City & County Council facilitates community clean ups throughout the year to clean up litter and illegally dumped waste from approach roads, local beauty spots, beaches and general public areas. The Environment Department continue to supply bags, gloves and litter pickers to many of the groups taking part, as well as collecting the bags of litter afterwards.

Clean Coasts have held a Big Beach Clean event and activities with local groups on Tramore beach over the weekend of the Vitamin Sea festival, 16th – 17th September. The Big Beach Clean is an annual call to action as part of the International Coastal Clean Up, operated internationally by Ocean Conservancy. This call to action invites communities and volunteers around the country to remove litter from around the Irish coast and many groups around the county took part in this event locally.

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