

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

TUAIRISC ÓN STIÚRTHÓIREACHT COMHSHAOIL
ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE REPORT

IMEÁN FÓMHAIR 2022
SEPTEMBER 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:

Within the month of August our work programme revolves around maintenance, where staff have been involved in maintaining our floral displays such as the prominent rose beds in the Peoples Park, the Bishops Place gardens, displays at the Apple Market and Time Museum.

The Green Flag Award for Parks is a scheme which recognises well managed parks and green spaces, setting the benchmark standard for the management of recreational outdoor spaces; where An Taisce, manage the Award in Ireland. Here in Waterford we have been working to a position to retain our Green Flag status in respect of Kilbarry Nature Park and coordinated a submission in respect of the Greenway for adjudication, this comprises of the application and a physical visit and assessment of the site. In early August, both sites were judged, and we now wait on the outcome of these results which are due to be announced in late September.

This summer has seen several events being hosted within Wyse Park by a number of voluntarily groups such as Spraoi, Waterford Youth Arts and the Little Red Kettle. These free events have run through the month of August and are proving very successful; where they have provided a space for these events to take and equally bringing a new focus to Wyse Park. Staff have been involved throughout the month ensuring the park is clean safe and maintained throughout the month while these have been ongoing.

In the coming weeks staff shall be involved in the further maintenance by way of pruning the perimeter hedge around Farronshooneen Park and Ballybeg Park and the maintenance of the internal paths. Equally alongside this staff shall we carrying out works in developing the new garden feature in front of the Theatre Royal as part of the ESB Brighter Future Arts Fund in partnership with *Business to Arts*, where it shall completed in the early part of September.

Tramore:

This summer has undoubtedly seen more visitors to Tramore and therefore this has tailored our work programme. Due to this fact our work programme has been concentrated around the aspects of maintenance in order to have Tramore presented in the best possible light, did mean works we had planned were parked for the high summer months.

However now again we are in a position to return to these items and therefore in the coming weeks where we shall be cutting our meadows for biodiversity positioned around the boating lake, along the road front to the back strand and the embankments along the ring road. It is highly important to cut and remove the old vegetation from these meadows in

order for them to produce and flower in next year's growing season. These shall be cut in conjunction with a local farmer who will in turn bale these areas and use this for fodder over the winter months.

Circular Economy and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2022

The Circular Economy and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2022 has been signed into law by the President.

What the Act does - The Act:

- defines the Circular Economy for the first time in Irish domestic law;
- incentivises the use of reusable and recyclable alternatives to a range of wasteful single-use disposable packaging and other items;
- re-designates the existing Environment Fund as a Circular Economy Fund, which will remain ring-fenced to provide support for environmental and circular economy projects;
- introduces a mandatory segregation and incentivised charging regime for commercial waste, similar to what exists for the household market. This will increase waste separation and support increased re-cycling rates;
- provides for the GDPR-compliant use of a range of technologies, such as CCTV for waste enforcement purposes. This will support efforts to tackle illegal dumping and littering, while protecting the privacy rights of citizens;
- places the Circular Economy Strategy and National Food Loss Prevention Roadmap on a statutory footing, establishing a legal requirement for governments to develop and periodically update these 2 policies;
- streamlines the national processes for End-of-Waste and By-Products decisions, tackling the delays which can be encountered by industry, and supporting the availability of recycled secondary raw materials in the Irish market; and
- consolidates the government's policy of keeping fossil fuels in the ground – by introducing prohibitions on exploration for and extraction of coal, lignite and oil shale

The next steps:

Draft Regulations on the Single Use Disposable Cup Levy will go out for consultation this autumn, with a view to these taking effect before the end of the year. A public consultation on new regulations in respect of the End-of-Waste and By-Products decisions making processes will also go out for consultation later this year.

The Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) will begin preparing the Statutory Codes of Practice in relation to the use of CCTV and other Recording Devices that Local Authorities will have to abide by as when using these technologies tackle illegal dumping. The Codes of Practice will then be submitted to the Minister for final approval.

Solid Fuel Regulations

New Solid Fuel Regulations have recently been approved by the Government and will come into force on the 31st October 2022.

What are the main changes in the regulations?

1. The new technical requirements for fuels have been set and are outlined below
 - Coal products and manufactured solid fuels must have a smoke emission rate of less than 10 grams per hour. Manufactured part biomass products must have a smoke emission rate of less than 5 grams per hour. – This is effectively the same as is currently in operation in low smoke zones. Traditional smoky coals cannot meet these requirements and as such a prohibited from sale.
 - Coal products and manufactured solid fuels, including manufactured part biomass products, must have (a) sulphur content less than 2% by weight on a dry ash-free basis, and with effect from 1 September 2025, subject to a market assessment, have sulphur content less than 1% by weight on a dry ash-free basis. – Again, this is similar to the current provision for these fuels but the limits are expected to be reduced over time.
 - A new requirement is that fuel products which are 100% biomass products including, wood products and wood logs, supplied in units of two cubic metres or less, must have a moisture content of less than 25% from 2022 and less than 20% from 2023.
 - Wood logs supplied in units of two cubic metres or more shall be accompanied by a notice containing the statement specified in the Schedule 1 of the regulations.

2. It will be prohibited to sell turf via the internet or other media, or from a premises or place used for the retail of food, fuel or other goods (including from shops, garages and petrol filling stations, fuel yards and public houses and other public places.
3. FPN's no longer apply – due to legal issues it will no longer possible to issue FPN's
4. Online sales are now included
5. No ban on the burning of fuel is included to allow householders to use up any existing product they may have from before the regulations are introduced.
6. There have also been changes to the producer and retailer responsibilities.

How will the regulations be enforced?

The regulations are made under the Air Pollution Act and as with the current regulations, the Local Authorities are primarily responsible for the enforcement of the new regulations within their functional areas. A contravention of a provision of these regulations is an offence under the Act and will be prosecuted under the Act.

Environmental Education & Awareness

Waste prevention

Waterford City & County Council are trialling two rinse stations to encourage the use of reusable cups, cutlery, plates, etc at the Vitamin Sea festival in Tramore, 16th – 18th September. These stations will allow attendees to bring their own reusable cutlery, plates, cups, etc and rinse them out for reuse at the festival. This will be especially useful at the food trail and picnic elements of the festival. The rinse stations are being made by a local social enterprise, with some of the materials being repurposed for reuse in the stations e.g. wood from pallets, reused sinks, etc. It is hoped that this trial will enable the rinse stations to be expanded for use at other food festivals in 2023.

VOICE have agreed to bring their Return For Change roadshow to Tramore for the Vitamin Sea Festival also on 17th September. This will explain about the reverse vending machines and the deposit return scheme. A Deposit Return Scheme is due to be introduced to Ireland at the end of 2022 to help increase recycling rates of single-use PET (Polyethylene Terephthalate) plastic and metal beverage containers. The Deposit Return Scheme will also help reduce litter, boost the recycling sector by collecting high quality materials, support jobs and assist Ireland in meeting EU targets. WEEE Ireland will also have a WEEE collection for electrical and electronic equipment on that day.

Waste prevention workshops will be held in libraries for both Heritage Week (August) and Reuse Month (October). 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 and Tramore.

Waterford City & County Council have been working with 2GoCup to encourage the use of 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

The Green Schools Seminar will be online this autumn as most teachers found this to be a convenient way to take part. Ms. Ella Ryan, Environmental Education & Awareness Officer will be available to visit schools or answer any questions that they might have, as will An Taisce's Green Schools team.

Waterford City & County Council are 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.

Litter Awareness

The Love This Place national public awareness campaign from Leave No Trace Ireland took place from the beginning of June to the end of August. It urged the public to play their part by acting responsibly when using outdoor spaces through raising awareness of our impacts and what we can all do to make a difference. The campaign began by prompting people to take a pledge to follow the Leave No Trace principles. This year, it focused on the impacts of littering, responsible dog ownership and fires. Waterford City & County Council has been using some of these messages across its social media to highlight local issues, adding local images and text where necessary.

The Mayor of the City & County of Waterford officially launched the Gum Litter Taskforce's gum litter education campaign on 9th August. The Gum Litter Taskforce (GLT) is an environmental initiative that was set up to develop and implement an awareness campaign to reduce gum litter. Supported and funded by the chewing gum industry, the GLT initiative has made improvements in relation to gum litter awareness and disposal behaviour over the last 14 years. The latest results of the National Litter Pollution Monitoring report showed the percentage of gum as a proportion of litter at 9.4%, down from 10.6% the previous year (2019). As part of the Gum Litter Taskforce the 'Bin It!' education programme will travel across the country and deliver 60 performances a year to primary schools nationwide. The 'Bin It!' school roadshow encourages students to responsibly dispose of litter, and particularly gum litter, through actor-led workshops.

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. We 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 agreed to host 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.

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