



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

Galway County Council
Monthly Management Report
November 2021

Housing Update

The **Galway City & County Housing Taskforce** met on the 27th October. Items for discussion included the new Housing for All Strategy, pipeline and build programme for city and county and an update on homelessness.

Future meetings are to look in more detail at the Approved Housing Bodies delivery and progress towards year end.

The Housing Delivery Action Plan is a requirement of the new Housing For All programme and must be completed by local authorities by late December. The plan will indicate how and where the local authority (with the assistance of Approved Housing Bodies) intends to deliver social and affordable housing from 2022 to 2026 inclusive. The Plan permits strategic decision-making on delivery and alignment of schemes with an overarching programme.

The plan will consider alignment with:

- Demand (Social Housing Needs Assessment)
- Geographic locations
- County Dev. Plan + LAPs
- Unit typologies
- Disability Strategy
- Traveller Accommodation Programme
- Age-friendly housing
- Landbank and identify where future lands are required
- Identify infrastructural deficits
- Supply via derelict and vacant properties, infill and brownfield sites.
- Balance between Local Authority build and other delivery streams

Preparation of the plan by Galway County Council is underway and a briefing on the nature of the plan was provided to the Housing SPC on 3rd November.

The **LTACC** met on the 15th of October, the meeting reviewed the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission's report and recommendations. A response was issued by the Council Housing Department to the report in August which was acknowledged but not commented on. The Traveller Liaison Officers gave an update on their work programme including – regularising tenancies on Halting Sites, supporting housing applications and visits to various locations to progress renovation and build projects.

Maintenance continues to progress Voids, refurbishments and retrofitting works;

54 houses have been made available for letting so far in 2021 by the maintenance/voids teams. These include a mix of voids, derelicts/Major Refurbishments and acquisitions requiring works.

In 2021 we have completed retrofitting on 56 units in Portumna, Ballinasloe, Eyrecourt and Killimor plus 4 major refurbishments that now have BER ratings B1 and A3.

Shannon Park BER's are now being assessed and all properties are coming in at A rated – significantly above what was thought to be achievable.

We currently are working on site retrofitting an additional 54 units in Roundstone, Loughrea, Athenry and Tuam.



Photo of Energy Efficiency works including solar panels and air to water heat pump.

The Homeless Unit continues to be busy and confirms that from this month on the *Cold Weather Response* will be operational from the Glen Oaks in Galway city with outreach already underway in the County. A number of beds are prioritised for county clients.

Housing First is well underway as a response to chronic homelessness situations - Galway Simon provide the housing tenancy supports for Housing First clients and have employed 2 dedicated Housing First Tenancy Sustainment Support Workers. A practise nurse, psychologist and an addiction counsellor (all part time) are also built in supports that must be engaged with. To date Galway County Council has supported 6 people through Housing First to take up tenancies with Action plans being developed for a further 6 between now and year end with tenancies in early 2022.

The challenge of combating homelessness is escalating and the management of it is compounded by the lack of availability of private rental options. The increase in presentations of people who have additional challenges such as mental health and/or addiction issues

requires more intensive attention and varying supports and regular open communication between all stakeholders.

The Capital Programme:

A significant landbank and capital programme is well underway and will support Galway County Council to meet its 2021 & 2022 targets. Construction costs, labour availability, consultants and market conditions will affect progress and some evidence of this is being seen in the sector currently.

Existing Landbank – lands for delivery of housing

Site / Location	Site (ha.) zoned / available for housing	Serviced	Status June	TOTAL Units	
CONSTRUCTION					
Barrack Street, Loughrea	0.07	Y	Construction complete (snag)	5	
Clifden	0.60	Y	Under construction	26	
Tír an Bhuí, Tuam	1.98	Y	Under construction	49	
Cartron, Kinvara	0.63	Y	Under construction	10	90
TENDERING FOR CONSTRUCTION					
Bridge Court, Ahascragh	0.45	Y	Tendering for construction	18	
Weir Road, Tuam	1.17	Y	Tendering for construction	30	48
PLANNING PROCESS					
Caisleán Raithlín, Ardrahan	1.67	Y	Part 8 to be lodged	10	10
DESIGN UNDERWAY					
Kiloran, Ballygar	1.81	Y	Under design –	10	
Pollboy, Ballinasloe	4.08	Y	Under design	TBC	
Claregalway	2.92	Y	Under design	95	(mixed tenure)
Ballymoe	0.20	Y	Under design	8	
Regeneration Project in Ballinasloe (Dunlo St).	0.30	Y	Under design	15	
Loughrea – Cosmona	2.86	Y	Under design	85	(mixed tenure)
Tuam Fire Station	1.0	Y	Under design	10	

Tuam Bermingham Rd	2.96	Y	Under design	90 (mixed tenure)	350-400
MEDIUM TERM DESIGN					
OPW site in Roundstone adjacent to CoCo lands	0.12	N	Longer term delivery (WWTP) but adjacent to GCC housing lands	6	
Station Road, Oughterard	2.00	Y	Stage 1 shortly.	30	36
Raheen, Athenry (WWTP connection issues)	1.06 Ha.				

Does Not include single property developments (rurals), Turnkeys or limited acquisitions.

ERCD Update

Disability Participation & Awareness Fund

The Disability Participation and Awareness Fund was launched by Anne Rabbitte T.D., Minister with Special Responsibility for Disability, on 18th October, with the 2021 Fund open solely to local authority applicants. A total of €2.5m will be made available nationally in 2021 and grants under the Fund will be to a maximum of €80,000. The priorities of the Fund in 2021 are to support the promotion and implementation of the UNCRPD (United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities) by increasing awareness within the local authority and communities, and supporting the participation of people with disabilities in local activities by removing barriers to community involvement. The Council has submitted an application to the Fund by the closing date of 8th November, and if successful will invite Expressions of Interest from communities and Disability Organisations for collaborative projects to expand and support the direct involvement and participation of people with disabilities in community life, e.g., community sports and recreational activities, arts and culture, or other aspects of community activities.

Communities Activity Fund

The Department of Rural and Community Development have launched the Community Activities Fund 2021 under the Community Enhancement Programme, and a total of €286,802 has been allocated to Galway County LCDC. The Fund is intended to support community groups, particularly those in disadvantaged areas, who have been impacted by the pandemic by providing funding towards running costs (utility bills, insurance) and support to enable

them carry out necessary repairs and improvements to their facilities. It is intended to open the Fund for applications once forms and guidelines have been received from the Department and each LCDC has flexibility to set its own closing date, no later than 28 February 2022.

Age Friendly

Age Friendly Ireland has appointed an Age Friendly Ambassador for each Age Friendly Programme and Mr. Keith Finnegan, Galway Bay FM, has accepted the role for Galway City & County. The intention is that the role of Age Friendly Ambassador by a high-profile person will promote age friendly initiatives, launch local projects and champion the role of older people as positive role models. Keith carried out a series of interviews with older people during Positive Ageing Week and also launched “Lockdown Diaries Galway” which was a creative writing project for older people which culminated in the publication of a book.

Arts Update

The Local Live Performance Scheme came to a conclusion on the 22nd October with the final performance taking place in the Station House in Clifden with David Kitt.

The total claim from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media under Phase 1 of the LLPS Scheme is €180,731.19 with 300 individuals being supported through this scheme and 451 days employment for artists, crew and technical event personnel as per the guidelines of the scheme.

North East Galway Fit-up Theatre Festival took place in 6 venues in North Galway in the first week of November supported by the Arts Office. It was the first of its kind in Galway and plans are in place to promote a 3-week festival with three shows touring venues for 3 weeks in September 2022.

Creative Ireland

Final projects have been delivered under the Creative Ireland Programme 2021 to include Comicon Ballinasloe (Ballinasloe Library), The Wandering Kite Festival Oughterard (Tourism Office), Westward Home – Travel Writers Remembered (Library Service). Total claim from the Creative Ireland Programme led by the Arts Office for 2021 is €178,211.

Outdoor Seating and Accessories for Tourism and Hospitality – Update

In total there are 427 outdoor seating and accessories scheme applications in the system. Of this 325 have been assessed after meeting the various deadlines and information provision requirements. The Fáilte Ireland cut off application submission deadline passed on October 8th and much of the work since then has been progressing the 325 applications verified to progress at that point. In the lead up to October 8th all applicants (whose application was not closed out at that point) would have received several reminder notifications of the status of their application as well the key final date for application submission and verification. The majority of the 325 applicants assessed have received an offer of funding, however there were a number of unsuccessful for one reason or another were not in a position to be approved.

The total amount paid out under the scheme as of end of October 2021 was €363,141 with a number of still being processed.

CLÁR Innovation Measure

Funding for innovative or pilot projects that address specific challenges faced by communities in CLÁR areas was recently announced by Minister Humphreys. Two projects were successful in County Galway with the Council receiving €30,825 to train community volunteers to be able to become playground inspectors and undertake repairs at three community playgrounds and to document their stories of development and sustainability. Comhairle Ceantar na nOileán Teo were awarded €50,000 for the establishment of Ireland's first Gaeltacht Retrofit Co -op and to establish a skills exchange and mentoring programme.

Please see Appendix 1 for Tidy Towns Results

I N F R A S T R U C T U R E & O P E R A T I O N S D I R E C T O R A T E

N59 Clifden to Maam Cross

The Council is pleased to confirm, following extensive interactions with the Dept, the inclusion of the N59 Clifden to Maam Cross in the recent National Development Plan. The members will recall that a previous application for consent to upgrade this section of road was submitted to An Bord Pleanála in 2013. However, ABP found that it was not in a position to approve the application at the time, stating that it was not possible to conclude that the proposed road development would not result in the loss of designated habitats, it did however comment favourably on the route selection process, noting that it was favourably disposed towards *“the on-line approach to the road improvement proposed which seeks to minimise environmental impacts.”* I can confirm that a Strategic Assessment Report (SAR) has been prepared and approved by Transport Infrastructure Ireland. This SAR has now been forwarded to the Dept for final approval.

The Strategic Assessment report (SAR) is the required deliverable at Gate 0 of the strategic assessment process. The SAR allows for early examination of objectives, consideration of options and identification of risks. It reviews the strategic fit of the project with government policy. The report also functions as a scoping document for the appraisal, and the traffic modelling process, thereby allowing an understanding of the methodologies to be used before any significant data collection, modelling or appraisal decisions take place.

N84 City Boundary to Clonboo

Similar to the N59 above, the N84 is at the preliminary SAR stage. The SAR is approaching the conclusion of the initial draft after which it will be sent to TII for a peer review process. Again, once feedback is received from TII and any comments/edits have been incorporated into the document, it will then be forwarded to the Dept for final approval.

Once approval of the SAR's is received, the formal appointment of consultants for the provision of multi-disciplined consultancy services (Civil/Structural Engineering, Environmental Services, Ecology, Archaeology, Planning, Landscape Architecture, Quantity Surveying etc) can commence.

Climate Change Adaptation And Resilience Works 2022

In October The Department invited local authorities to submit applications for Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience works on regional and local roads, for **consideration** for funding in 2022.

Projects can include but are not limited to the following:

- Preventative measures such as drainage works to mitigate road flooding.
- Works at bridges to take account of increased hydraulic loads due to “flash floods” or other climatic events. Such works would aim to mitigate against scour damage and the undermining of the bridge structure.
- Protection measures for roads which would be vulnerable to severe weather events such as embankment stability measures to protect the road and prevent slippage.
- Altering the level of the road to mitigate flooding and reduce road closure frequency.
- Road edge protection measures.
- Replacement/repair of seawalls or retaining walls which support regional and local roads.

Priority will be given to measures that will prevent or mitigate against a re-occurrence of the risk event in the future. In certain cases, consideration may be given to remedial/repair works where severe damage due to storm events has occurred if the likelihood of re-occurrence can be shown to be low.

The Council was advised that the total funding application should not exceed its initial Supplementary Restoration Maintenance allocation amount for 2021. A total of 41 schemes totalling €2,137,500 were submitted for approval by the deadline of 29th October 2021.

Moycullen Bypass

Wills Brothers Limited have established their presence on site and the first tasks being undertaken is to commence the site clearance and then the provision of access to the bridge

structures. It is understood that construction work will get into full swing in early 2022 with a 2-year construction program.

Wastewater Infrastructure

The Council, in liaising with Irish Water as regards wastewater infrastructure, welcomes the addition of Ballygar, Mountbellew and Eyrecourt to Irish Water's Capital Investment programme which will allow for substantial new upgrades. This will address the current position whereby development in Mountbellew in particular is restricted because of the lack of wastewater treatment capacity and also allow for improvements in regulatory compliance at all the sites.

The Council also welcomes the fact that the CPO for Athenry WW Network got through without any objections to An Bord Pleanála, which should enable the project to go to tender before year end.

Rural Water

The Rural Water section is currently finalising accounts for the year and is happy to report that in excess of €4,000,000 in Annual Subsidy has been paid out to group schemes in 2021 towards their operation and maintenance costs. The scheme which is administered by the Council and funded from the Department of Housing, Heritage and Local Government is a vital income source to enable rural group water schemes to continue to provide drinking water in areas where public supplies are not available.

Further there is a definite ramping up of activity on the upgrading of schemes as we emerge from lockdown. Approximately €850,000 has been paid out to date in 2021 and this figure is likely to reach €1m by end of year.

**PLANNING & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT &
CORPORATE SERVICES**

Library Services

Library Service

First Five Little Library Book Bags/Málaí Beaga Leabharlainne Na Chéad 5

The "First 5 Little Library Bags" initiative is funded by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Inclusion and Youth and the Department of Rural and Community Development. This innovative programme aims to strengthen the relationship between Early Learning and

Care centres and public libraries as part of the First 5 Government Strategy for children, and public libraries' Right to Read Programme.

In June, Galway Public Libraries distributed 520 book bags to over 300 Early Learning Centres located throughout Galway city and county. For the second phase of the project, in November, 684 bags will be distributed. All ELCs were contacted by library staff by liaising with the Galway Childcare Committee and invited to collect their Little Library Bags at the library located nearest to the Early Learning Centre.

The Little Library Bags contain five books and additional resources on reading and literacy for children and families. The books are aimed at the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) age range of 2.5 years to 5.5 years but may be used with all preschool children. After school services are also receiving an allocation of books, as part of the second phase of the "Little Library Book Bags" initiative. Little Library Book Bags with a selection of Irish language books are being distributed to Early Learning Centres and Naoinraí in Gaeltacht areas.

Additional resources included in the bags include:

- *Discover the Fun: Get ready for adventure with exciting children's services!* Library Services Guide
- *Stories and Storytelling in Early Learning and Care* developed by Barnardos
- *Building Little Libraries* developed by Barnardos
- *Babbling Babies* developed by Lifestart Services, Donegal Library Service and HSE Health Promotion and Improvement Service
- *Right to Read at Your Library*
- *Library Social Story Card*
- *Dyslexia and the Younger Child*
- *Book Share Ireland*
- Registration form to apply for library membership on behalf of your Early Learning and Care Centre
- A leaflet about Galway Public Libraries' services for children and families

Drop In Campaign

As part of a new national campaign, libraries in Galway are putting out a call to everyone to come visit and enjoy the library in-person again. While buildings closed to the public during Covid-19, library services continued online with events, classes and clubs moving online including ebooks, audiobook, online newspapers and magazines. In fact, many people discovered their library for the first time online during Covid.

So, whether it is someone used to visiting regularly, or someone who has never been, we're urging everyone to drop into their local library and discover what's on offer. The library has

something for everyone of all ages and interests. Hopefully, when they discover what's on offer, they will make a habit of dropping in to see us

We are inviting everyone to take a closer look at their library, to see beyond what they thought it was, and find out about all the amazing services we offer – completely free.

Corporate Services

Success for Palace Grounds in Tuam in Green Flag Awards 2021

The 2021 Green Flag Awards were announced on Wednesday 17th November 2021, by An Taisce Environmental Education Unit, acknowledging Ireland's best public parks and gardens, which included a Green Flag Award for our very own Palace Grounds in Tuam.

The International Green Flag Award Scheme is the mark of a quality park or green space and is recognised throughout the world. It is only awarded for exceeding tough environmental standards in green space management and excellence of visitor attractions.

The Palace Grounds is the public park in Tuam and has been described in the past as Tuam's "Jewel in the Crown". The Palace Grounds is a vital part of the town's living history, a place where the people of Tuam connect with nature. The park is a safe home for nature, a climate-proofed place enabling healthy living, and the sharing of memories and stories. The management of the park focuses on knitting the access points and boundaries into the town's historic and emerging urban design. Each access point is welcoming, and visitors can explore the historic aspects of the grounds. Orientation and interpretation throughout the park are first and foremost concerned with ensuring that the natural and historic features of the park are healthy and biodiverse. The Palace Grounds is an oasis for well-being and is enjoyed by a very broad spectrum of visitors from a regional spread. It is often used as physical activity and recreational hub to encourage the participation of people in sport, physical activity and active living.

The Green Flag Community Award extends the Scheme to include community initiatives such as Community Gardens, Community Parks, and Tidy Towns Projects. In Ireland the Green Flag Community Award Scheme is supported by the Department of Rural and Community Development.

International accreditation for public park excellence in Ireland has increased again this year, to reach over 100 accredited public green spaces. Ireland was today awarded a total of 103 Green Flag sites, comprised of 84 formal public Green Flag Park sites, along with 19 volunteer run Green Community Sites.

This year over 2,300 public sites in 16 countries around the World have achieved Green Flag or Green Flag Community Award status and once again, more Green Flag Awards have been

secured by Irish Parks and Gardens than by any country, other than the UK where the scheme originated in 1996.

Operated within the Republic of Ireland by An Taisce Environmental Education Unit, the Green Flag Awards are judged every year by a peer jury of green space experts, who volunteer their time to visit applicant sites and assess them against eight strict criteria, including horticultural standards, cleanliness, sustainability, and community involvement.

This year participating countries, alongside the Republic of Ireland, included Australia, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Mexico, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, and the United States of America.





Environment, Biodiversity, Fire and Emergency Services:

Environment:

Atlantic Seaboard North CARO - Regional Energy Bureau

In 2018, four Climate Action Regional Offices (CAROs) were established in response to Action 8 of the 2018 National Adaptation Framework (NAF).

The Atlantic Seaboard North (ASBN) Region includes 5 Local Authorities (LAs): Donegal County Council, Sligo County Council, Mayo County Council, Galway County Council and Galway City Council. Mayo County Council host the CARO for the ASBN Region.

The ASBN CARO and the 5 LAs and are working in partnership with SEAI to establish a Regional Energy Bureau to facilitate the delivery of related 2030 targets.

This Regional Energy Bureau will lead a program to:

- Help establish and embed an Energy Management Program within each LA
- Develop and help implement a cost optimum pathway to meet related 2030 targets
- Explore opportunities to develop a scalable and enduring Energy Bureau / Agency for the Region

The ASBN CARO have advertised a tender competition on e-Tenders for the supply of a dedicated team of resources to deliver the 3-year work program for the ASBN Regional Energy Bureau.

Burial Grounds:

Killimordaly Burial Ground:

The Environment Department have completed work on an extension to Killimordaly Burial Ground. The development has delivered an additional 36 x double plots.



Quansboro Burial Ground:

Work to deliver an additional 51 x double plots at Quansboro Burial Ground is approximately 95% complete. The remaining items (Landscaping Works) will be completed in Q1 2022.



Leenane Burial Ground, Connemara:

The Environment Department have completed work on an extension to Leenane Burial Ground. The development has delivered an additional 58 x double plots.



Clarenbridge Burial Ground:

The Environment Department have completed work on an extension to Clarenbridge Burial Ground. The development has delivered an additional 176 x double plots.



Columbarium, Moycullen Burial Ground:

Galway County Council are working in partnership with the community in Moycullen in the development of a Columbarium in Moycullen Burial Ground. Ground works to commence shortly.

Waste Management and Enforcement

The waste enforcement team was strengthened over the last number of months with now 4 dedicated waste enforcement officers, an enforcement lead and dedicated administrative support. The impact is already being seen on the ground with a number of court cases in October alone. 1,036 waste complaints have been received to date by the waste enforcement team for 2021 with 676 being closed off.

A case conference was carried out with the Gardai in relation to illegal activity in the metal industry and the robbery of catalytic converters. Two files have been forwarded to the law department in relation to these activities.

Audits and awareness campaigns have been carried out in relation to commercial food waste bins and their segregation.

‘Picker Pals’ Programme for Primary Schools (Tackling our national litter problem)

The Picker Pals programme highlights the litter problem but more importantly it shows how the problem can be reduced and hopefully eliminated through continued education and action and the support of everybody.

The number of classes participating in this programme has increased from 51 to 56.

The programme was launched on the 12 October 2021.



Environmental Awareness Social Media Campaign

Social media campaigns continue to be highlighted on Twitter and Facebook. Campaigns in October included REUSE MONTH, UPCYCLING Competition, Dog Fouling, 2 WEEE campaigns, Bonfire Night, Managing Waste in Business, and others. In excess of 105 tweets were issued.



An Taisce GREEN SCHOOLS Programme

There are 90% of schools involved in the Green Schools programme. On 4th November An Taisce ran online seminars for each theme in the Green Flag programme. Over 80 Schools country wide Council participated, and Galway County Council was well represented. Galway County Council continue to support schools in the programme.

Clontuskert National School

Clontuskert National School who are involved in the Green Schools programme won a prestigious international climate award at the COP26 Conference. They are the first school in Ireland to win the Climate Action Project Schools Award for their video on a campaign to ban

plastic on fruit and vegetables in supermarkets. They are the real trail blazers on climate change and a great example to all schools in the County.

Anti- Litter Poster and Slogan Competition

In April 2021 all schools were invited to take part in an Anti- Litter Poster and Slogan competition. We have developed a calendar from the entries submitted and it will be available for circulation in December 2021.



LAPN – Local Authority Prevention Network - Funding for water fonts in schools

In October 2021 funding was granted to grant aid 10 water fonts in 10 Secondary schools. Following an invitation to all secondary schools to register their interest in this programme, 15 schools expressed interest. Galway County Council are part funding the extra 5 schools as part of this prevention initiative. We are working in collaboration with the schools to part fund the installation of water fonts which will allow students and teachers to consider using reusable water bottles and therefore reduce the use of single use plastic bottles.

Bonfire Night Campaign

A media campaign to discourage bonfires and the burning of waste was initiated at Halloween in local papers and social media.





mywaste

Guidance on eliminating Single Use Plastic Bottles



Eliminating Single Use Plastic Bottles

Options to eliminate plastic bottles in your club are two-fold - you can consider a 'complete ban' or a 'phased introduction', whichever you think fits your club best.

Phased Introduction

Identify a team or teams who will lead the challenge in your clubs. Set a 'plastic savings' challenge for the team to monitor progress. Consider completing a short case study on your approach, which will allow for other teams to learn from.

Complete Ban

If you are banning plastic bottles completely you need to ensure that this message is communicated to your entire club, setting dates on when plastic bottles are no longer accepted and outlining alternatives. It is particularly important that team trainers, coaches and managers etc. all communicate this message to their teams and indeed lead by example.



Communication

Ensure all relevant club members are aware of the work you are doing. This is an opportunity to communicate the rationale behind the activity in addition to the approach.



Inspire

Keep spreading your message as education and awareness is the key to success!

Practical advice on reducing plastic bottles

As your club is making changes to improve overall environmental performance, it's important to note that different actions and activities will work better in varying settings. Outlined in this guidance document are samples of what can be done, some of which will be more relevant than others depending on situations and circumstances.



TIP! Encourage the use of reusable water bottles and highlight some of the many reusable options available (always ensuring EU standard is adhered to).

TIP! If you are not going for a complete ban on single use plastic bottles initially, you should also promote recycling, which is also an important environmental activity.



By placing information posters and signage at waste stations throughout your facility, you will assist improve waste segregation. It is also important to provide adequate receptacles for recycling to ensure all plastics and other recyclable materials are captured. Downloadable assets are available from mywaste.ie/business.



TIP! Communicate 'good practice' messages within the club and work towards this being the norm.

Quantifying Single Use Plastic Bottles - Desktop Exercise

This exercise will allow clubs to quantify the amount of single use plastic bottles that can be potentially eliminated - calculations can be based on individuals, teams, by age etc.

Number of club members / players	20
How many training sessions/matches (engagements)	5
Assumption of 1 bottle per person per engagement	X 1
Total per	100

TIPS!

Identify a Green Team

member who will co-ordinate and liaise with participating teams, particularly in identifying and addressing any issues that arise.

Create awareness of the prevention activity by communication to club members and community, through the use of signage for your facilities and through social media.

Outline that your club is working hard to reduce the quantity of plastics used by club members, whilst also ensuring in the interim, that all recyclables are captured in the recycling stream. This will not only highlight what you are doing but may encourage further participation and ideas from others.

Set your plastic campaign launch date and ensure everyone you are targeting knows about it.

Positive commentary and acceptance will encourage and inspire other club members to participate. It's important to encourage this and show how everyone can participate and be involved. Having 'We have saved X Plastic Bottles' social media content and posters which are updated at as required will further encourage participation.

Some other ideas to consider

Think sponsorship!

Source sponsorship for team reusable bottles - local business often support local clubs

Think commitment!

Ensure that your club policy and charter includes your commitment to eliminating single use.

Think Reduce!

Other common plastic items include straws and sachets - which could also be eliminated.

Galway County Council is supporting Clarenbridge GAA club in the national GAA Green Clubs pilot initiative which aims to develop good practice guidance for clubs focusing on five key areas to support environmental sustainability challenges. The Green Club Programme is a partnership between the GAA, LGFA and Camogie Association, the Regional Waste Management Offices and Local Authorities across Ireland and is structured around five key areas: Waste, Water, Biodiversity, Energy and Travel and Transportation.

Clarenbridge GAA is one of several GAA clubs that have been chosen nationally to participate in the pilot phase of the programme focusing on waste management. They are working with the GAA, Regional Waste Management Offices, and Galway County Council to develop guidelines and share knowledge and best practice on how best to manage waste in GAA Clubs. The final stage of the project will be to develop a waste management toolkit, which will be made available to GAA clubs across the country.

The Galway Roscommon Education Training Board Course on Climate Action (Joint Project with Roscommon County Council)

Galway County Council are presenting at a Greener living Course with GRETB




GREENER LIVING COURSE
THINK GLOBALLY – ACT LOCALLY
 GRETB COMMUNITY EDUCATION ONLINE COURSE
 CLIMATE CHANGE EXPLAINED WITH PRACTICAL OPTIONS ON SUSTAINABILITY
 EVERY FRIDAY FOR 4 WKS – STARTING 12TH NOVEMBER, 11AM – 12PM



- WEEK 1 – CLIMATE CHANGE & SUSTAINABILITY – AN INTRODUCTION
- WEEK 2 – LOCAL RECYCLING SERVICES/AMENITIES, WHAT IS THE CORRECT BIN TO USE AND MORE. PRESENTATION BY BOTH GALWAY AND ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCILS.
- WEEK 3 – TEXTILE UPCYCLING – THEORY AND DEMONSTRATION
- WEEK 4 – FOOD WASTE – PRACTICAL BUYING AND COOKING OPTIONS
BIODIVERSITY & COMPOSTING

TAKING THE NEXT STEP
 TO BOOK A PLACE PLEASE EMAIL anne.mannion@gretb.ie OR PHONE ON 087 6266398
 This course will have a sign language Interpreter to enable the participation of the Deaf Community




This course is facilitated by GRETB Community Education Service in association with Galway & Roscommon Co. Councils

Anti-Litter and Anti-Graffiti Grant Application

Throughout the year the Environment Section have co-ordinated several projects that have raised awareness in relation to anti-litter and anti-graffiti.

A Grant application has been submitted to the Department to recoup 70% of the costs.

New Signage for Dog Fouling Campaign

As part of the ongoing campaign for Dog Fouling new signage is being installed around the county.



Biodiversity Report:

The following gives an insight into biodiversity initiatives that have been undertaken or are planned by Galway County Council:

Biodiversity Online Training for Council Staff & Communities

Dr Amanda Browne, Ecologist has produced a series of 6 recorded online presentations that are primarily be aimed at community groups who would like to get a better understanding of the biodiversity of their local area as well as ways in which they can enhance it. In addition to this she delivered a series of 6 recorded online presentations for local authority staff to assist them in dealing with biodiversity issues and support them in finding opportunities to enhance biodiversity of towns and villages in the county. These videos are currently been reviewed and will be made available in the coming months. This initiative is being funded by National Biodiversity Action Plan and Galway County Council.

Summary of video content:

Local authority staff

Working with natural heritage

In this video a summary is given of some of the incredible natural heritage features that occur in County Galway. An introduction is given to some of the factors that should be taken into consideration when working with natural heritage and some of the actions that should be engaged to ensure that there is enhancement and conservation of natural heritage with any projects undertaken.

Appropriate Assessment

This video gives an overview of the steps that must be taken prior to any project taking place to ensure that there is no negative impact on protected habitats and species.

Creating a pollinator plan for a public space

Pollinators are in serious threat due to loss of habitat which limits food and nesting availability. This video provides an overview of how to produce a pollinator plan which identifies areas of importance to pollinators within an public space and provides recommendations where improvements can be made that will benefit pollinators and as well as all biodiversity.

Working with Invasive species

There are several invasive species that threaten biodiversity within County Galway.

This video introduces these species that will aid identification as well as some guidelines on the appropriate methods that should be used to control them.

Working near water

County Galway has many rivers and streams running through the county as well as large areas of wetland habitats. Wetlands are important conservation areas, and this video gives an overview of some of the precautions that should be undertaken prior to any projects taking place in the vicinity of a waterbody or wetland or any area that may have connectivity to a water body or wetland via drains and ditches.

Landscaping with biodiversity

This video provides some guidelines how landscaping and management of public spaces can be achieved throughout the county in a way that benefits biodiversity. The importance of linking biodiversity 'hotspots' within the county is discussed which will enhance the natural heritage of the region for all.

Community groups

Introduction to biodiversity

This video introduces biodiversity and how it relates to the current climate crisis. Actions that can be taken at all levels of the community that can enhance the biodiversity of our towns and villages are discussed.

Creating wildflower meadows

The importance of species-rich grasslands is discussed, and an overview is given on how wildflower meadows can be created within gardens, towns, villages and any green space within our local area.

Hedgerows

The importance of hedgerows as habitats and wildlife corridors is provided in this video and the appropriate management of hedgerows which maximises the biodiversity potential of this valuable habitat is discussed.

Pollinator plans

This video provides an overview of the importance of pollinators to us all and how a pollinator plan can be created for a local village and thereby creating a valuable local network of pollinator friendly areas.

Woodlands and trees

This video introduces woodland ecology and presents some of the fantastic woodlands that we have in County Galway. Some recommendations on how trees should be managed for biodiversity.

Recording biodiversity

Citizen science is such a powerful tool in monitoring biodiversity and in this video, resources are given which help improve training and recording of easily identifiable biodiversity from spring flowers, butterflies, and other pollinators to hedgehogs.

Invasive Species

The Invasive Species working group of Galway County Council has established a system to record details of invasive species that are submitted by members of the public and staff with regards to invasive species on Council property. Targeted Gunnera and Japanese Knotweed control measures are taking place in several places in the ownership of Galway County Council. Invasive species management plans for a small number of areas of the county have been undertaken and the Invasive Species Working Group is currently reviewing the reports. In addition to this advice and guidance is given to members of the public with regards to invasive species. This initiative is being funded by National Biodiversity Action Plan and Galway County Council.

Rodenticide awareness and best practice rodent control training for Galway County Council Staff

The aim of this course was to increase awareness of the risks associated with the use of rodenticides and to improve understanding for the requirement and capacity for best practice rodent control. This course was relevant for anyone who is responsible for rodent control (either directly undertaking rodent control or responsible for the staff or contractors who undertake rodent control) as well as those who are responsible for premises or grounds where rodent control is required.

This course provided an overview of commensal rodents in Ireland, including their ecology and behaviour and the situations in which their control is necessary. The environmental implications of the use and misuse of rodenticides will be discussed through a range of locally relevant examples of how these compounds enter the food chain, the pathways of contamination to non-target wildlife species with a focus on our current knowledge of exposure of rodenticides to Irish Wildlife. The legislation regarding the control of rodents and use of rodenticides will be provided and an overview of the methods for best practice rodent control including the requirement for an Integrated Pest Management approach to achieve effective rodent control while minimising the environmental risks.

A video is nearing completion with regards to rodenticide awareness, and it is intended to roll out further training with regards to rodenticide awareness.

This initiative was funded by National Biodiversity Action Plan and Galway County Council.

Audit of Wetlands in North East Galway.

This project created a site database of known and potential wetland sites in North East County Galway. The wetland habitats recorded include lakes, ponds, watercourses, springs, swamps, wet grassland, marsh, bogs, fens, bog woodland, riparian woodland, wet woodland, and coastal habitats. In all, 38 wetland habitat types were researched and mapped. The resulting dataset from the project provides a useful tool for future heritage conservation planning in the county, will assist in the development of sustainable planning programmes, and will allow for the design of future targeted wetland surveys and wetland research programmes in NE County Galway.

Site information amalgamated on sites includes site name and code, site provenance, size (area in ha), location, site conservation designations, habitat information on the specific wetland vegetation type(s) present (and extent where available), information on rare species of note, impacts and threats on sites, a list of published reports holding information on the site and the nature of same, and site description. The audit report is currently being reviewed the Wetland Audit Steering Group.

The development of StoryMaps was also an output of this initiative. This project was funded by National Biodiversity Action Plan and Galway County Council.

Yellowhammer Survey.

The Yellowhammer was formerly a widespread breeding species in Ireland but is now mainly restricted to the east and south. The breeding range of the Yellowhammer is strongly linked with the cultivation of cereals, so much so that their population has declined and disappeared from areas where cereals are no longer grown, to the extent that the species is included on the Red list of the Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland.

A few isolated Yellowhammer populations are present in areas such as the Burren in County Clare and small numbers of birds in Connemara in Galway. In recent years, Yellowhammer have been recorded in an area of intensive agriculture in at Coldwood in south Galway, even though there is no cereal grown in this area.

We undertook a survey to assess the size and status of the population and their habitat associations during the breeding and non-breeding season, with the objective of understanding whether this is a viable population and the conditions that allow Yellowhammer to remain here, which is well outside of their core range. We also collated records of Yellowhammer from throughout the county to identify other areas where Yellowhammer populations remain.

Our survey showed that Yellowhammer occur in high densities at Coldwood but have an extremely limited breeding range, which is confined to a karst area surrounding a turlough with extensive pockets of Hawthorn and Hazel scrub which are used for nesting. Despite the small size, the population appears to be viable, with records indicating Yellowhammer have been present for over ten years. We recorded a breeding density of 12 pairs per km², which is higher than recorded in most parts of the Yellowhammer range in Ireland. However, the limited breeding range of Yellowhammer is confined to the turlough, which is surrounded by improved pasture and there is little scope for population expansion.

Outside of the breeding season, all Yellowhammer were recorded in the fields and farmyard of a stud farm which is located directly adjacent to the turlough. We recorded a maximum count of 22 birds in the stud farm during the winter months. The turlough was avoided outside of the breeding season and no birds were recorded here outside of the period April to August. We also recorded and assessed Yellowhammer populations in three other locations in south and east Galway, all of which shared similarities in the geology and land use conditions to Coldwood, as are karst areas where horses are the main livestock.

This survey shows that despite the low numbers and limited range, Yellowhammer can persist and seemingly thrive in confined areas where the conditions are suitable, even where there is no cereal present.

Barn Owl survey and conservation in Galway

BirdWatch undertook this work on behalf of Galway County Council. They undertook a survey of Barn Owls in County Galway to assess the status of the population and to inform their conservation requirements. They employed a citizen science and strategic survey approach to obtain information on Barn Owls including assessing occupancy in a range of suitable sites (>100) throughout the county.

They confirmed 35 sites to be occupied by Barn Owl in County Galway in 2020 and 2021. Confirmed or probable breeding for Barn Owl was recorded in 40 10km squares in County Galway, which is a significant increase (66%) on the breeding range of Barn Owl as recorded by the most recent Breeding Bird Atlas (2007-2011) indicating a population increase over this ten-year period.

The current breeding range of Barn Owl has returned to the same extent as defined by the first Breeding Atlas (1968-1972). The increases in breeding range and numbers have been recorded in the east and south of the county, and Barn Owl remains scarce in west Galway. They showed the importance of built heritage sites for Barn Owls in the county and recorded Barn Owl breeding in three sites which are known to be occupied for over 25 years, in addition they confirmed Kestrel to be present at 15 ruined structures, Raven to be present at 13, Swift at ten and Peregrine to be present at eight ruined buildings.

The most common site type used by breeding Barn Owl was castles (n = 15), followed by ruined mansions (n = 5). Through the strategic survey in addition to receiving reports from landowners and members of the public we confirmed 14 Barn Owl breeding sites for the first time in 2021.

BirdWatch worked with landowners to ensure the protection of existing nest sites which included maintenance and repairs at breeding sites (in communication with NPWS). Most breeding attempts monitored (12) successfully raised young, however there were several occupied sites where breeding attempts were not confirmed (n = 10), reflecting a generally poor breeding season for Barn Owl nationally in 2021. In general, the survey provides data to indicate that Barn Owls are faring well in east and south County Galway, the population has increased in range over the last three decades and now occupies a similar breeding range to that recorded fifty years ago. T

To facilitate and increase capacity for local community and landowner conservation action for Barn Owls in the county, they produced a range of visual conservation guidance resources, which includes a guidance video on Barn Owl nest boxes, habitat creation and management and rodent control. All aspects of the survey and conservation initiatives were promoted through local press and radio and social media to increase awareness and appreciation of Barn Owls in the county. The video and resources produced are currently being reviewed.

All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025: COUNCIL PARTNERS: ANNUAL REVIEW 2021

A report from Galway County Council was submitted on 3 November in relation to projects and initiatives undertaken by Galway County Council in 2021 with regards to the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan.

Fire and Emergency Services

New Athenry Fire Station – Request for permission to proceed to request for tender for the construction of the new station sent to the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management on the 24th September.

New Loughrea Fire Station – Authorisation received from the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management for the appointment of a design team to progress the project to detailed design and cost plan.

F I N A N C E

Finance Update

On 12 October a targeted commercial rates waiver to support certain sectors was agreed by Government, for the final quarter of 2021. To continue to support both the local government sector and the ratepayers impacted. A waiver of commercial rates will apply to specified businesses in the final quarter of 2021. This 3 month waiver has modified criteria and accordingly is a separate, standalone waiver scheme.

General Terms and Conditions

A three-month waiver (October to December) will apply to eligible businesses and will take the form of a credit in lieu of rates. The value of the waiver is the equivalent value of 25% of the annual rate bill for 2021. The waiver will apply to businesses occupying eligible property categories.

Eligible Categories

The broad categories of businesses the credit in lieu of rates applies to are as follows:

- ☑ Hospitality, including restaurants and cafes;
- ☑ Leisure;
- ☑ Miscellaneous entertainment;
- ☑ Certain tourism related categories; and
- ☑ Airports.

An application process is not required. Galway County Council will automatically apply a 100% credit in lieu of commercial rates, for a three-month period, to classes and categories of occupied rateable property where the occupying business is not in an excluded category.

Mise, Le Meas,

Mr. Jim Cullen
Chief Executive
Galway County Council

18th November 2021