

Report on	Sustainability, Biodiversity and Environmental Education Update
Date of Meeting	10 th October 2023
Reporting Officer	Mark McAdoo, Assistant Director, Environmental Services
Contact Officer	Karl McGowan, Waste & Sustainable Development Manager

Is this report restricted for confidential business? If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To update members on some community engagement work by the Sustainability, Biodiversity and Environmental/Recycling Education team over the last six months.
2.0	Background
2.1	Following the latest organisational restructuring a new team was formed within Environmental Services, bringing together Sustainability/Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environmental/Recycling Education.
2.2	The team consists of two Officers working on Sustainability and Climate Change, two Officers working on Environmental/Recycling Education and one Biodiversity Officer. The Biodiversity Officer post, whilst based in Environmental Services, is shared with the Planning Department two days per week.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>Sustainability</p> <p>Community engagement work included a sustainable food / grow your own event held at Castledawson allotments on the 12th June, organised and delivered by the team. There was also a clean-up / gardening event held at Ballygawley Community Allotments and Gardens on the 24th of August, organised by the local community group but assisted by Council Officers. Approximately 20 tonnes of peat free compost was obtained from NWP and made available for free to Mid Ulster community groups and schools including six clubs in the Mid Ulster Council area that are participating in the GAA Green Club Programme offered support.</p> <p>A low carbon and battery powered grounds maintenance equipment demo was held on the 29th August at Tullyhogue Fort. A trade stand was set up and demonstrated new robotic, battery powered and hybrid lawnmowers, strimmers,</p>

chainsaws and blowers. The event was well attended by the Councils ground maintenance team who availed of the opportunity to trial/use equipment.

3.2 **Environmental/Recycling Education**

From April to September 2023 a total of 12 school visits were carried out ranging from recycling talks to class groups, whole school assemblies and meetings with Eco Teams and Teachers responsible for leading the Eco Schools Programme. Help and support was provided to some of these schools with renewal of Green Flag awards and advice given to those starting or continuing with their journey towards a Green Flag award. Two community groups were also visited and each given a recycling talk.

The team also supported the annual EcoSchools awards event at The Hill of the O'Neill in Dungannon. 17 schools were awarded their Green Flag at the event with prizes given for Best School and Best Teacher.

Two schools requested and received a tour of our Recycling Centres (in Drumcoo and Magherafelt) to assist them with their recycling/environmental work

Six events were attended with services ranging from Recycling information stands and the provision of "Recycling Games" for an interactive activity for those attending. Events supported during the period included the following:

- Health & Wellbeing Information Day, Glenavon Hotel Cookstown
- LHLH Small Grants Roadshow, Burnavon
- Tamlaght O'Crilly May Fair
- Castledawson Allotments school project (in partnership with Communities & Place)
- Clogher Valley Show (see photo included at appendix)
- Kilcronaghan Vintage Rally

A total of 27 community clean ups were supported between April to September with approximately 1360 volunteers provided along with litter pickers and bags.

3.3 **Biodiversity**

Mid Ulster Bird Ringing Project - 2023 is the 7th year of the Traad Local Nature Reserve Constant Effort Site (CES) project. It continues to be a success with biometrics of over 300 birds of 20 species collected, and the data submitted to the British Trust for Ornithology who monitor over 110 such CES sites across Britain and Ireland. Eleven of the twelve planned visits were able to be undertaken, one being missed due to inclement weather. The sessions were attended by a total of forty three volunteer ringers, amounting to over 300 'volunteer hours'.

All Ireland Daubenton's Bat Survey - This is the 14th consecutive year this survey has been undertaken along the Torrent River/Coalisland Canal. Data collected from this survey feeds into the All Ireland Daubenton's Bat Survey through Bat Conservation Ireland. Over 600 sites have been surveyed across the island of

	<p>Ireland since 2006. Coalisland Canal is one of a limited number that have been continuously surveyed for over 10 years.</p> <p>All-Ireland Pollinator Plan - The Biodiversity Officer continues to work with Neighbourhood Operations for the creation of meadows through the Don't Mow, Let it Grow management system. The Biodiversity Officer has held several workshops at targeted community groups explaining the benefits of pollinators, and how to provide food, shelter and nesting places for help them.</p> <p>Biodiversity Recording - The Biodiversity Officer continues to encourage people to record the wildlife they see and submit their records to the Centre for Environmental Data and Recording (CEDaR), the national database for Northern Ireland. In addition to submitting records from non-structured surveys, the Biodiversity Officer encourages local people to take part in 'citizen science' projects such as the Big Garden Birdwatch, Big Butterfly Count, etc.</p> <p>One of the objectives under the Corporate Improvement Objective for Climate Change/Sustainability is to develop a Habitat Survey Assessment tool to utilise across the suite of Council properties. Six council sites were selected to trial the process ranging across small, large, urban, and rural. Habitat surveys on all six sites have been undertaken over the summer. These will be written up and evaluated over the next few months with the pilot database developed.</p>
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	<p>Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications</p> <p>Financial: Within Environmental Services annual revenue budget.</p> <p>Human: Officers continue to provide advice and respond to queries from the public on a wide range of issues in the fields of Sustainability/Climate Change, Biodiversity, Circular Economy and Recycling Education.</p> <p>Risk Management: None</p>
4.2	<p>Screening & Impact Assessments</p> <p>Equality & Good Relations Implications: None</p> <p>Rural Needs Implications: None</p>
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	Members are asked to note the content of this report.

6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Photograph of Environmental/Recycling Education Team at Clogher Valley Show