

Report on	Sustainability, Biodiversity and Recycling Education Update
Date of Meeting	8th July 2024
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	
	No	X

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To update members Sustainability, Biodiversity and Recycling Education activities
2.0	Background
2.1	Following the last organisational a new team was formed within Environmental Services, bringing together Sustainability, Biodiversity and Recycling Education. The team continues to organise a wide range of events across the community.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>Mid Ulster Family Fayre and Repair Café</p> <p>On Saturday 15th June the team in partnership with the Council's Poverty and Social Inclusion team hosted a Mid Ulster Family Fayre, pre-loved sale and Repair Café focused on baby, child and family items in Meadowbank Sports Arena. The event focused not just on sustainability but also poverty and social inclusion. Having a child is expensive due to the need for high-cost items such as cots, prams etc. For many families this is a huge financial strain. Despite the cost of these items many are not reused, with many ending up in our recycling centres.</p> <p>Therefore with the aims of promoting reuse and sustainability, reducing poverty and increasing social inclusion the event included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A family fun day – this was free to all and included bouncy castles, face painters, balloon modelling, a recycled arts and crafts workshop, MUDC recycling games and other free activities such as football, badminton and table tennis. 2. A pre-loved sale - focused entirely on baby, child and family items such as baby equipment, clothes, toys and games. Pre-loved Sellers were charged £10 per table for selling, with all the proceeds from the table

- sales going to the chosen charity for the event, Baby Basics Magherafelt. Entry to the market as with the fun day was free.
3. Pop Up Repair Café – in partnership with Northern Ireland Resource Network and volunteers from Repair Café Carryduff, Repair and Share Foyle and Be Safe Be Well Portstewart the Council hosted Mid Ulster’s first ever pop-up Repair Café, where residents could have a range of items from bikes and toys to electronics and clothes repaired for free by a team of skilled volunteers. They also incorporated a tool sharpening service where householders could have garden tools such as hedge shears, clippers and secateurs sharpened for free.
 4. Sustainable tea / coffee / water refill station – to reduce waste at the event we instructed all visitors to bring their own refillable drinks cup or water bottle and they would get free tea/coffee/water or juice. Disposable cups were not available on the day but we did have reusable cups on sale and these could be purchased at a cost of £2 each, with proceeds once again going to Baby Basics Magherafelt. Reusable drinks bottles were also available on the day, and these were kindly donated by NI Water as part of their Refillution campaign.
 5. Information Stands – Finally we had a number of information stands on various topics such as family health and well-being, healthy eating, recycling and fostering.

The event was very successful, with 8 information stands, 35 pre-loved sellers and over 700 visitors to the event. Hosting the event cost approximately £1,300 which will be split between the Waste and Sustainability team and the Poverty and Social inclusion team. On the day £350 was generated from pre-loved table sales, £180 from reusable cup sales and £70 was donated to the Repair Café by satisfied customers, with a total donation of £600 going to Baby Basics Magherafelt.

A QR code was distributed to all those who attended the event and at the time of writing 17 responses had been received, all of which were positive. It would be the teams ambition to replicating the event on an annual basis and rotating around the 3 main towns where facilities are available.

3.2 **Eco Schools**

From December 2023 to May 2024 approximately 60 school and community 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 within their school. 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. Approx. 30 further community groups, businesses, mothers unions and sports clubs were also visited and each given a recycling talk and other assistance.

3.3 **Biodiversity update**

The Traad LNR Constant Effort Site (CES) continues to be a success with biometrics of birds collected and data submitted to the British Trust for

Ornithology. The information gathered across the 110 CES sites in Britain and Ireland is vital in monitoring bird populations through time, and helps identify possible causes of population changes, enabling conservation action to be targeted appropriately. In addition, the training opportunities available at Traad is recognised, with many volunteer ringers attending to further their ringing experience. The Biodiversity Officer delivered a presentation on the Traad CES at the BTO Annual Conference. 2024 will be the 8th year the project has been officially registered as a CES. This will require 12 ringing sessions over the spring and summer. Up to the end of June 2024, all 6 of the planned 6 sessions have been completed. These have been attended by a total of 29 volunteer ringers (starting at 5:45am), amounting to just under 200 volunteer hours.

The Biodiversity Officer has been contacted by, and arrangements are being made to undertake the Daubenton's Bat Survey along the Torrent River / Coalisland Canal in August 2024. This will be the 15th consecutive year this survey will have been undertaken at this site. Data collected from this survey feeds into the All Ireland Daubenton's Bat Survey through Bat Conservation Ireland. Coalisland Canal is one of a limited number that have been continuously surveyed for over 10 years. The longevity of such projects is vital in determining population trends of Daubenton's bat.

One of the objectives under the Corporate Improvement Objective for Managing Environmental impacts 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 and documented. The process is currently being assessed and the 'tool kit' finalised in the coming months.

3.4

Tullyvar BioBlitz

On Monday the 20th May, the team held a Bioblitz event in partnership with Fermanagh & Omagh District Council at Tullyvar Recycling Centre and brought together students from Roscavey Primary School, Beragh, McClintock Primary School, Seskinore, St Mary's Primary School Aughnacloy and Churchill Primary School Caledon. Workshops began with groups building bee homes followed by insect surveys / pond dipping, making seed balls, and planting sunflowers in paper potters. These activities were designed to raise awareness about the important role of pollinators to the health of local ecosystems and agriculture.

A second event was held on Tuesday the 21st May following the theme of No Dig sustainable growing. Students attended from Altamuskin Primary School, Beragh, Cooley Primary School, Sixmilecross, St McCartan's Primary School Clogher and Augher Central Primary School. The events on this day include; a "No Dig" growing demonstration, making seed balls, an insect survey pond dipping activity, planting peas. NWP provided the compost for the event which was produced from the Council's own green waste materials.

These combined activities addressed the issue of climate change and aligned with our recycling education commitment to fostering a sense of environmental responsibility and awareness. The 2 joint events witnessed an enthusiastic turnout of over 200 pupils accompanied by their teachers, with active participation

	from various sections of the school community symbolising a collective commitment to growing environmental stewardship. Considering the success of this initiative, it is planned that the team will continue to organise various planting events to sustain and expand the positive impact on our local environment.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: All activities were funded from existing revenue budgets.
	Human: Significant Officer time is spent in planning, supervising and taking part in these various activities and community engagement work.
	Risk Management: All events are conducted according to Council health and safety procedures and subject to the necessary risk assessments.
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: None
	Rural Needs Implications: None
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	Members are asked to note the content of this report.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix 1 – Photographs of Sustainability events/activities



Flyer for Family Fayre event.



Council Chair Cllr Eugene McConnell with event partners NIRN.



Council Officers at the recycling stand.



Pre-loved sale stands



Council Chair Cllr Eugene McConnell with event attendees.



Baby Basics representatives who were the events chosen charity.



Litter Pick organised in conjunction with Biffa Waste and Dunbia.



Staff engagement event organised in conjunction with Biffa Waste and Moy Park.



Checking the primary and secondary feathers of a kingfisher.



Volunteer ringers at Traad Point processing caught birds.



Pupils making seed balls and sowing wildflowers.



Pupils making 'No Dig' beds and planting vegetables.



Pupils from Roscavey Primary School, Beragh, McClintock Primary School, Seskinore, St Mary's Primary School Aughnacloy and Churchill Primary School Caledon on the 1st day of the Tullyvar Bioblitz.



Pupils from Altamuskin Primary School, Beragh, Cooley Primary School, Sixmilecross, St McCartan's Primary School Clogher and Augher Central Primary School on the 2nd day of the Tullyvar Bioblitz.



Pupils conducting an Insect Survey and learning about insects.



Pupils taking part in a pond dipping activity and learning about wetlands.