

Mark McAdoo
Mid Ulster District Council

23 November 2020

Dear Mark,

Council support request for the Eco-Schools Programme in Northern Ireland 2021/22.

This letter is a request for support for the Eco-Schools programme in your council area in 2021/2022 and to highlight the excellent value the Eco-Schools Programme brings to Northern Ireland in helping deliver a safe and sustainable future for our youth.

Your continued support both financially and with staff time is highly appreciated by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful and is critical to the success of the programme in educating young people on environmental issues and empowering them to make informed choices, take positive action and be the change needed to ensure a sustainable Northern Ireland. We seek to give young people a platform to make their voices heard and influence their peers, communities, policy and decision-makers.

The Eco-Schools programme encourages and directs young people to think about litter, waste and recycling, energy saving, water conservation, transport options, biodiversity, the natural environment they are custodians of, and make positive choices for a better future. We look forward to continuing the relationship we have established over the years which has helped cement Northern Ireland as top achiever globally in the Eco-Schools programme.

Eco-Schools creates behavioural change in our youth and we have seen it dispersing into society via our Eco-Campuses and Eco-clubs who are now engaging and valuing the impact of the Green Flag Award. Currently Stranmillis College and Queen's University are working with us and our first Eco-Club was awarded with their Green Flag. The programme may start in schools however, the impact is far reaching and we only have to look at this growth in Ireland to see the positive impact with 36 campuses registered with 13 awarded the Green Flag including one hospital site. Continued support of our programme will encourage this further growth and spread into the wider society through positive behaviour change.

We bring additional support from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, grant making bodies and other corporate and charity funders and continue to make efforts to diversify funding opportunities for environmental education in Northern Ireland.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind councils they play a vital role in helping us meet our **match funding** for the grant received from DAERA to keep this programme operational. It is important to note that we have so far, because of your continued support, not had to pass the cost on to schools and have been able to offer the programme and assessments for free. We hope to continue this in the future as schools come increasingly under financial pressure. However, loss of council support nationally would result in match funding not being met and the programme either running at a cost to the school or the loss of core funding.

Other countries have moved to charging schools, however, for us at Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, we believe it is imperative this remains a free programme so **all sections of the community** can benefit equally and it not become a postcode lottery. However, the reality may be individual councils who do not support the programme may see their schools paying up to £200 for assessment and award of Green Flag next academic year.

Over the past few years we have increased the amount of support we offer schools in your council area as demand has grown. The demand has grown even more so since lockdown as our online resources and support offered to families and teachers during this time increased and is continuing to rise. As a result, we have seen a huge increase in our social media footfall (52.6K reach this month) which is growing on a weekly basis with our online webinars highlighted in the report attached.

We have also noticed an increase in support requested from councils over the years and often go above and beyond our agreement to ensure we best support them. We are currently a team of three working across Northern Ireland and demand on our time and resources is intense and stretched.

Currently your council contributes 2% of the overall Environmental Educational Team budget at a cost of £1,700 to support the match funding of the Eco-Schools Programme at Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful. That combined with 8 other councils equates to 16% and Belfast City Council contribute 16.5% alone to the programme.

We feel Belfast City Council see the value in the programme and fund it accordingly. We understand not all councils are in the position to offer this kind of support especially on the back of COVID19 however, we must be honest and inform councils we feel they are undervaluing the impact and importance of our work and the value added we bring. One example of value added is, last academic year alone, as part of our support to schools in your council area **our programme provided project funding of £1,548** showing a clear interest in our work.

We must also consider there has only been a £200 increase in the level of support since 2015. However, when calculating staff costings, we must take into consideration the percentage increase in cost of living each year which has been approximately 2.4% each year which has not previously been factored in. If all councils were on board with our preferred support option, we would hope to recruit a new member of staff to better support individual councils and give the time for consultation and support which is often requested.

Your responsibility to our youth and your constituents

The executive office published findings this month on our young people's perceptions of the Outcomes Framework and one thing was made very clear: our young people are much less concerned about their own futures individually than they are about the longer-term future of the collective and, specifically, the environment. By far the biggest differential comes with outcome 2 – young people think we live and work sustainably, protecting the environment, more than twice as many young people disagreed with Outcome 2 than agreed (50% disagreed, compared with 22% who agreed). This is clear evidence our future voters will be influenced moving forward by whomever is looking after their collective future and the environment.

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Dealing with the Climate Crisis moving forward, employment within this sector will be in demand and we need to prepare our young people for the jobs they will be working in. Eco-Schools is more than an extracurricular activity; our programme is shaping many young people's future career paths. We are in the process of developing a video to show good examples of how this has already been happening and will continue to expand. By fully investing in our programme you are investing in the NI youth's future.

There is an ever increasing engagement from parents in your council and they have shown interest in the programme and the impact positive environmental change it is making in their homes. We hope to support these parents and give them a voice to share their thoughts especially with so many having home-schooled their children for several months. Eco-Schools is continuing to act as a lifeline for many parents and young people during these difficult times.

Statistical Impacts from the Eco-Schools programme

- **100% of schools** signed up to Eco-Schools Programme which equates to 341,456 pupils in 1,136 schools here.
- **332** schools currently have the Eco-Schools Green Flag and we've seen increases from 147 in 2016/17 to 176 in 2018/19 indicating the upward trends in interest in the programme.
- Average reduction in all types of waste to landfill = **47.57g per day per school** (19% reduction in weight)
- Mental awareness lessons rose **from 38% to 96%**
- **57%** raised knowledge and awareness of **Healthy Living** topic since 2015/16
- **49%** Overall average increase in understanding of **Climate Action**
- **393,907 sustainable journeys** have taken place since 2016 through the Translink Travel Challenge with 16,686 pupils getting involved
- **49%** increase in the **Global Perspective** topic since 2018/19
- **37%** increase in awareness of **Litter topic** since 2015/16
- **2,973** bags of litter collected since 2018/19
- **29%** of schools in Northern Ireland are flying the internationally recognised Green Flag - Ensuring a positive experience for our young people – through engaging them in actioned-based and socially-responsible learning.
- **Total CO₂ saving** recorded in the last 2 last academic years is **4,006,595**
- **38 schools** signed up to **Marine topic** in the first year.

Your continued support also ensures that Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful can offer other environmental education initiatives to schools in your Council area most notably Young Reporter's for the Environment; Single Use Plastic initiatives, Translink Travel Challenge all of which contribute to schools achieving Eco-Schools Green Flag status.

When budgets are tight across all sectors we understand now may not be the ideal time to request an increase in financial support however, we must emphasise councils have a responsibility to their constituents to create a 'more resilient Northern Ireland which will take timely and well-informed decisions to address the socio-economic and environmental

impacts of climate change' as highlighted in NI's second Climate Change Adaptation Programme (NICCAP).

Taking all of the above into consideration, increased growth, footfall to our social media sites and online content, cost of living increase, support to council staff, voice of our young people, interest from parents and the statistical impacts, we only see it fair councils consider an increase in their level of financial support to help match fund our programme. In order for this to happen councils will need to review and evaluate the level of support they currently provide Eco-Schools with and we would invite you to review the following 4 options.

Option 1: Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful's preference.

Support of the Eco-Schools Programme at a cost of **£10,942**. This includes Wheelie Big Challenge and core running cost of the programme, which equates to an investment of approximately **38 pence per pupil** in your council area and would bring your council in line with other support.

- A pre-existing programme to **assist council delivery of their waste and litter prevention programmes and to help councils meet waste prevention and landfill reduction targets.**
- Direct communication with **all schools** in your council and NI as a whole.
- Support councils in educating and raising awareness on **litter, waste and avoidable single use plastics** that will be dealt with in forthcoming EU and Northern Ireland Executive Committee legislation.
- The opportunity to be associated with this prestigious international environmental education programme.
- Clear linkage to Council support for young people's environmental leadership development.
- **Free training** for your staff to become Eco-Schools Green Flag Assessors.
- Provision of assessments and flags
- Organisation of **1 Cluster Group meeting and 1 Green Flag Clinic** for teachers in the council area which deliver valuable information to schools progressing through the Eco-Schools programme and provide the council with opportunities to promote their own projects and build relationships with teachers.
- **Attending and promoting Green Flag award ceremonies** hosted by the Council which are important to schools and pupils, re-enforcing the importance of their work and introducing pupils to their local council's involvement and relevance in what they are doing in school.
- **Development of the Ambassador Eco-School network** in your Council area - Ambassador Eco-Schools are flagship schools driving their environmental message further into the community and mentoring other schools in their area.
- Providing reports and statistics on schools in your Council area which are involved in the Eco-Schools programme. **Biannual reports** are provided to supporting councils highlighting statistics for schools and information about initiatives.

- We provide support for council staff and elected representatives such as responding to ad hoc queries on the status of schools in the council area.
- Access to the Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful Data Hub, which puts information and statistics from Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful programmes you support at your fingertips (www.keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org).
- **Opportunities to promote your campaigns** and activities through the monthly Eco-Schools newsletter and multiple social media channels and signposting schools to relevant council contacts on the Eco-Schools website (www.eco-schoolsni.org).
- **Preference given to schools in council areas** supporting the programme for promotion through media outlets.
- Allowing schools access to additional funding provided through Eco-Schools for projects such as the international Wrigley Litter Less campaign.

Please refer to Wheelie Big Challenge Proposal Attached as prices can vary or please see a quick overview below in option 2.

Option 2: Wheelie Big Challenge – proposal attached

Investing in the Wheelie Big Challenge at a cost of **£7,967** which would equate to an investment of approximately **27.5 pence per pupil** in your council area. This would see marked reductions in waste to landfill.

Our role:

Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful will:

- contact school Eco-Coordinators to recruit schools to the project,
- manage all communications,
- Provide the toolkit for school and home
- provide workshops/webinars and support,
- ensure data is gathered and uploaded correctly
- gather competition entries,
- organise invitations to the final event and
- generate PR around the project.
- Produce an end of project report

Benefits to the council would include:

- increased association with a high profile environmental education programme,
- improved recycling in schools,
- messaging to homes to assist with council recycling targets,
- educate around Resource Efficiency in line with the NI Waste Strategy – emphasising on waste as a resource and an opportunity, rather than a burden.
- Informing young people, schools and families to move away from landfilling the majority of waste to a more circular economy where products and materials are recovered and regenerated, whenever possible.
- help meet the EU Waste Framework Directive target of recycling (including preparing for re-use) 50% of household waste by 2020 and beyond, as well as the Executive's Programme for Government commitments.

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- **Less litter on the streets** surrounding the school and in the Council area.
- Council area specific webinars around the waste topic
- Engagement in the Wheelie Big Challenge represents a good opportunity to reengage lapsed schools and support schools towards their Green Flag awards.
- an increased percentage of schools achieving Green Flags in their area,
- positive PR produced around a final celebration and prize giving event.

Data has shown the programme has an:

- Average reduction in all types of waste to landfill = 17.852kg per day (71% reduction in weight)
- Average reduction in recyclable waste to landfill = 4.642kg per day (71% reduction in weight)
- Average reduction in food waste to landfill = 11.951kg per day (85% reduction in weight)

Option 3:

Support of the Eco-Schools Programme at a cost of **£2,975** would equate to an investment of approximately **10 pence per pupil** in your council area.

- A pre-existing programme to **assist council delivery of their waste and litter prevention programmes and to help councils meet waste prevention and landfill reduction targets.**
- Direct communication with **all schools** in your council and NI as a whole.
- Support councils in educating and raising awareness on **litter, waste and avoidable single use plastics** that will be dealt with in forthcoming EU and Northern Ireland Executive Committee legislation.
- The opportunity to be associated with this prestigious international environmental education programme.
- Clear linkage to Council support for young people's environmental leadership development.
- **Free training** for your staff to become Eco-Schools Green Flag Assessors.
- Provision of assessments and flags
- Organisation of **1 Cluster Group meeting and 1 Green Flag Clinic** for teachers in the council area which deliver valuable information to schools progressing through the Eco-Schools programme and provide the council with opportunities to promote their own projects and build relationships with teachers.
- **Attending and promoting Green Flag award ceremonies** hosted by the Council which are important to schools and pupils, re-enforcing the importance of their work and introducing pupils to their local council's involvement and relevance in what they are doing in school.
- **Development of the Ambassador Eco-School network** in your Council area - Ambassador Eco-Schools are flagship schools driving their environmental message further into the community and mentoring other schools in their area.
- Providing reports and statistics on schools in your Council area which are involved in the Eco-Schools programme. **Biannual reports** are provided to supporting councils highlighting statistics for schools and information about initiatives.

- We provide support for council staff and elected representatives such as responding to ad hoc queries on the status of schools in the council area.
- Access to the Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful Data Hub, which puts information and statistics from Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful programmes you support at your fingertips (www.keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org).
- **Opportunities to promote your campaigns** and activities through the monthly Eco-Schools newsletter and multiple social media channels and signposting schools to relevant council contacts on the Eco-Schools website (www.eco-schoolsni.org).
- **Preference given to schools in council areas** supporting the programme for promotion through media outlets.
- Allowing schools access to additional funding provided through Eco-Schools for projects such as the international Wrigley Litter Less campaign.

Option 4:

Support of the Eco-Schools Programme at the same cost of **£1,700** which equates to an investment of around **6 pence per pupil** in your council area. Maintaining costs at this level is an indication of our commitment to work hard to add value to your investment in our young people but will however have a few small amendments to the original support offered for reasons previously outlined.

As well as the associated environmental benefits mentioned above for your funding we can provide your council with:

- A pre-existing programme to **assist council delivery of their waste and litter prevention programmes and to help councils meet waste prevention and landfill reduction targets.**
- Support councils in educating and raising awareness on **litter, waste and avoidable single use plastics** that will be dealt with in forthcoming EU and Northern Ireland Executive Committee legislation.
- The opportunity to be associated with this prestigious international environmental education programme.
- Increased awareness and use of Council recycling facilities; improved recycling rates.
- **Discounted training** for your staff to become Eco-Schools Green Flag Assessors.
- **Attendance at 1 Cluster Group meetings** for teachers in the council area which deliver valuable information to schools progressing through the Eco-Schools programme and provide the council with opportunities to promote their own projects and build relationships with teachers.
- **Attendance at award ceremonies** hosted by the Council which are important to schools and pupils, re-enforcing the importance of their work and introducing pupils to their local council's involvement and relevance in what they are doing in school.
- **One End of Academic Year Report** issued in July highlighting statistics for schools involved and information about initiatives.
- We provide support for council staff and elected representatives such as responding to ad hoc queries on the status of schools in the council area. However, further

consultation on support of developing and delivering initiatives will **incur a consultancy fee charge.**

- Access to the Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful Data Hub, which puts information and statistics from Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful programmes you support at your fingertips (www.keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org).
- Opportunity to promote campaigns, events and activities in **one monthly** newsletter and **two social media posts annually**. Posts and article must be provided in full.
- Schools in council areas not supporting the programme are **unable to access funding** provided through Eco-Schools projects such as the international Wrigley Litter Less campaign.

We can all sense that these are important times for the environment and society both locally and globally. Eco-Schools therefore will have an increasingly critical role in mobilising staff and pupils to adapt to the changes that will be required and to be part of the answer and the solution to the many issues becoming apparent. It is evident from recent developments including the Global Climate Strikes and the Conference of Youth for Climate Action that young people also are asking for support and affirmative action. Eco-Schools provides a very practical action-based delivery mechanism for the many solutions. Working together we can all build a better future. Whilst any one of us working alone will struggle to get the critical mass needed.

Enclosed is an Eco-Schools Support Request Form. I would be very grateful if you could provide the necessary Purchase Order number by the end of January 2021 to ensure access to the benefits listed above is maintained in 2021/22.

If you require any further information or clarification on anything above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely



Charlene McKeown
Environmental Education Manager
Charlene.mckeown@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org
Tel: 07845050890
Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful

Eco-Schools Support 2021-2022 Request Form

Please tick your preferred option:

- Option 1: **£10, 942** at a rate of 38 pence per pupil
- Option 2: **£7,967** at a rate of 27.5 pence per pupil
- Option 3: **£2,975** at a rate of 10 pence per pupil
- Option 4: **£1,700** at a rate of 6 pence per pupil

..... Council

- Agrees to support the Eco-Schools Programme

OR

- Do not wish to support the Eco-Schools Programme

Council Purchase Order Number (required for invoicing)

Signed

Name

Position/job title.....

Date.....

Please return to:

Victoria Rowan
 Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful
 Bridge House
 2 Paulett Avenue
 Belfast
 BT5 4HD

victoria.rowan@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org

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**Mid Ulster District Council Eco-Schools Metrics
September 2020**

- Number of schools registered in council area – 123
- Total number of pupils in council area – 28,905
- Number of schools who have achieved the Green Flag – 73
- Number of schools with current Green Flags – 44 (36%)
- Number of schools with lapsed Green Flags – 29 (24%)
- Green Flags awarded:
 - 2015/16 - 19
 - 2016/17 – 26
 - 2017/18 – 13
 - 2018/19 – 29
 - 2019/20 - 12
- Ambassador Schools:
 - St Colm's High School (new in 2016/17)
 - St Columba's Primary School, Straw (new in 2017/18)
 - Kilronan SP School (new in 2018/19)
- Cluster Group Meetings:
We are currently exploring how these meetings could be delivered virtually in the future.
- Number of schools engaged with Wrigley Litter Less Campaign (ES and YRE) 2019/20 – 8 primary and post-primary schools
- Number of schools engaged with TTC 2019/20 – 2 schools
- Number of Schools engaged with the Single Use Plastic Project and Workshop – 5 post-primary schools
- Awareness and engagement with Eco-Schools Topics:

Topic	Number of Schools engaged in topic	Overall Percentage (%)
Biodiversity	31	25
Climate Action	8	7
Energy	34	28
Global Perspective	27	22
Healthy Living	42	34
Litter	35	28
Outdoor Learning	32	26
Transport	12	10
Waste	40	33
Water	13	11
Marine	3	2

Financial Support to Schools through Project Funding

Project Name	School Name	Funding
Wrigley LLC Eco-Schools	St Mary's PS Draperstown	398
Wrigley LLC YRE	St Colm's High School	318
	St Patrick's Comprehensive College	82
Single Use Plastic	Fivemiletown College	250
	St Ciaran's College	250
	St. Patrick's Co-Ed Comprehensive College	250

Total Financial Support to Schools through Project Funding: £1548