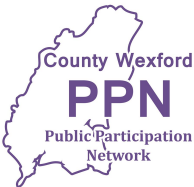


Creating a Local Sustainable Future - Practical actions for your community

PPNs working together to strengthen our communities wellbeing and resilience.

23rd February at the Kilkenny Ormonde Hotel, Kilkenny



Click the following links to join your relevant PPN: [Carlow](#), [Kilkenny](#), [Wexford](#), [Waterford](#), [Tipperary](#). [Click here](#) to find your Local Environmental Network.

Introduction

Organised by the Public Participation Networks of five counties; Kilkenny, Tipperary, Waterford, Wexford and Carlow, in collaboration with the Irish Environmental Network, this event brought together 120 people from across the South East to explore ideas and actions that can be replicated in their locality, whether at home or in the community. Senator Grace O’Sullivan gave an opening speech, and an impressive lineup of facilitators hosted each workshop. This day gave insight into the challenges that communities are faced with and the possibilities that exist for positive change, while also providing inspiration and working examples of ideas that have already been put into action.

This event concentrated on local action, with the aim of giving attendees some real and positive actions that can be taken back into the community and used for local change. It was designed for anyone who is interested in creating a future proof community; whether you are already a part of a community group, you are a councillor or a business owner, or any individual who is ready for action. It was also of special interest to anyone who is a part of their local Public Participation Network (PPN), or who wanted to learn more about the possibilities for action available through their PPN.

During the event there were four workshops, each aiming to give an overview of the topic and create a list of actions and ideas that can be used by groups and individuals to tackle the issue. The outcomes of these are detailed below. The four workshops were:

- **Global Goals for Local Change - Bringing the Sustainable Development Goals to Life**

Facilitated by Davie Philip.

- **Community Initiatives - Expanding the Conversation**

Facilitated by Ray McGrath.

- **Water Catchments - Local Response to Climate Action**

Facilitated by Fran Igoe.

- **Actions for Biodiversity**

Facilitated by Pádraig Fogarty.

This report strives to be a comprehensive look at the issues that were raised on the day, collections of suggestions for actions that you can take in each of the workshop topics, and resources to help you with these actions. This report is intended to be useful to everyone, not only people with a previous interest in environmental issues. It is up to each of us to do what we can, and every action, however small, helps.

There is a lot here, and it may seem overwhelming. Think of what you are passionate about, and choose one small action from the list that speaks to you. Two simple and immediate upcoming actions that are extremely manageable are to talk to your candidates for election about climate change when they come canvassing at your door, and to let your grass and hedges grow throughout the summer to increase habitat for biodiversity. Read on for more resources surrounding these actions.



Workshop outcomes

Each workshop asked participants to take note of the issues being discussed, and to work together to brainstorm actions that are feasible to achieve in their community. Three questions were asked in order to group ideas together; Where are we now, Where do we need to be, and How do we get there? In this report, the outcomes of each workshop are transcribed directly from the table canvases, and so reflect the writings of attendees. Actions that were suggested on the day are included, and have been further built upon with additional resources. We hope that you can use these actions as a jump off point to achieve positive results in

your area. All resources mentioned are hyperlinked, so you can follow these links for further information on the subject. To view actions mentioned in each workshop, skip to the *'Turning ideas into action'* section under each workshop heading. At the end of the report, you will find information on each stallholder that was present, as well as some resources that attendees sent for inclusion after the event.

A common issue:

A theme which ran through all workshops was the perception of inadequate and often counter productive actions being undertaken by the government and Local Authorities. The lack of councillors at the event was noted, as was the sense of frustration and

apathy created from a lack of leadership, as well as the perceived ignorance or uncaring attitudes of those in positions of power. This sentiment is being noted here instead of being repeated throughout the document.

Action that ran through all workshops:

Talking to local councilors is an action that is very timely at the moment. The local elections take place this May, and councilors and canvassers will be knocking on your door. Ask them what they will be doing to combat climate breakdown in their constituency. Ask them questions relating to your environmental interests. If they don't hear it on the door, they will not think of including it in their policies.

Take this a step further, by asking your family, friends and neighbours to do the same. This action pertains to the outcomes of all workshops.



Global Goals for Local Change - Bringing the Sustainable Development Goals to Life in Ireland.

Facilitated by Davie Phillip

Overview of the SDGs:

The Sustainable Development Goals, also known as the Global Goals, are a set of 17 global goals aiming to end poverty, combat climate change and ensure that we leave peaceful, sustainable societies for future generations. This historic agenda was agreed upon by 192 countries worldwide in 2015.

Together, these goals provide a roadmap for all countries to follow for the next 15 years, encouraging all of us to make the right choices now to improve life for generations to come.

In April 2017, the Irish Government launched its plan for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which outlines how Ireland will deliver on the goals by 2030. The plan highlights the role of local level action – in particular the role of local government and Public Participation Networks - in raising awareness of and achieving the goals at local level.



Resource: To read more about the SDGs visit the website sdgsforall.ie. You can also download resources here. There was much talk of mapping the SDGs to your goals, and using the SDGs as a common language. As part of raising awareness of the SDGs and of learning more about where they fit in with your goals, you can download a

free communications pack. There are also excellent apps highlighted for learning more about each goal. [Click here](#) to be brought to the page. You can also sign up to receive the free resource pack and further updates to your inbox [here](#).

Workshop discussion overview:

Many issues were noted and discussed by attendees, with awareness and education at all levels highlighted as being vital. The lack of both of these is an issue, and creating awareness individually can be challenging. Conversation was championed as the best way to tackle the lack of awareness on an individual and group level, with the need for larger scale actions to be implemented throughout society. Educational actions should be inclusive with an open invite extended to all.

Continued and interactive education on the SDGs needs to be implemented in all areas - school, government, PPNs, workplace, homes etc. A 'lost generation' was noted, which has shown itself in the lack of education across all sectors as well as top government departments. There is a lack of joined up thinking between departments, and a breakdown of communication and understanding between the Department of

Agriculture, Local Agendas, and the people on the ground and their needs. There is also a feeling of powerlessness among the public.

It was felt that everyone is on a different road at the moment and that we are in a place of denial and disbelief. A shift in values is needed, to reduce consumption and know that enough is plenty. We need less wastage, and to protect our natural resources such as fishing. We could change the language we use, and could reframe the language of environmental goals with that of profit and social resilience goals. We need to adopt the SDGs in our everyday lives.

There is a lot of hope from the new generation which is waking up to these issues. Younger people seem more tuned in. Schools have an awareness, with Green Schools including SDGs in their literature.

To tackle many issues relating to our values we need to link with nature, and the SDGs can provide a common language to facilitate this from all sectors. Sustainability needs to become second nature. We need to utilise the power of consumerism, and realise our own power around creating systematic changes. We need to work from the community upwards and have community buy-in. We need to look at global change and enforce best practice.

The huge scale of the task of highlighting the SDGs was mentioned, and it was said that this job needs to be tackled by all stakeholders, the public and the PPN. We need to know what connections are already there, and it was asked what a small group can do on an individual basis. Many of these existing connections and resources for action are set out in this report.

We need more openness and accountability. We need fundamental change at a base level from the building blocks of society. We need policy and politician buy in, with

government policy adopting the SDGs. We need a sense of industrial and parental responsibility.

One problem that was noted was that relevant organisations can be very small with a lack of funding. It was said that local councils and politicians need to respect the importance of volunteers, and engage with and facilitate volunteers.

What we can do about these issues was discussed.

We can cultivate local stories for global change. Social media amplifies messages. Dialogue has to be bottom up, not top down. We can create relevant protests at the right time to educate from the ground, and learn from your peers and from other countries.

Mapping SDGs to the work you are doing is hugely beneficial for your own knowledge and to spread awareness. PPNs are using SDGs for strategic plans and this could be furthered. Use the goals to measure your success.

Work locally. Local communities need to be more active, more vocal and better funded.

Everyone has to take responsibility in their own everyday. We need collaboration between everyone, creating more of a sense of community and less individualism.

Some ideas for wider action that came from the group were: a contract for buildings that they must replace any trees that get knocked, a lawnmower tax, green procurement, steady state economics, Environmental Impact Assessment and a Human Impact Assessment for all decisions, use SDGs as a benchmark across all sectors and organisations, hold a Citizens Assembly on land use and farming to establish new language and values that align with eco-social goals, funding policies at national,

regional and local level need to be benchmarked against the SDGs, we need to support climate change legal action against the Irish government where appropriate.

Companies, organisations and agencies could identify the relevant goals where they can impact through their activity and target other goals to implement over time. Funding could be subject to SDG checklist. We need a coalition of different political strands, and to work with international policy makers. Importantly, we need to work with the 5% who are already tuned in and support those who want to change.

Turning ideas into action:

There was an abundance of input from the workshop, and many good ideas. We have put together the following list of actions that you can undertake in your community. Some of these are direct suggestions from the above ideas, while others have been built upon with extra knowledge and input from the organisers.

1. Inform yourself.

Familiarise yourself with the SDGs. You can view all SDGs and their targets [here](#).

2. Map the goals to your group/organisation.

Make it a group activity by getting your whole group together to discuss the SDGs. Make it interactive by printing out the individual icons for each goal, and use post-its to allow your members to write what aspects of your group's work fits in where.

3. Rebrand your community group.

Use the [communications pack](#) to add the SDG logo to your social media, newsletters, and printed materials. Add the logos for the individual goals that your group covers wherever you can. Doing this helps achieve the above two

points, helping you to become more familiar with the goals, and mapping the goals to your work. It also helps create awareness of the goals by allowing them to be seen by all those who interact with your group.

4. Include SDGs in all activities.

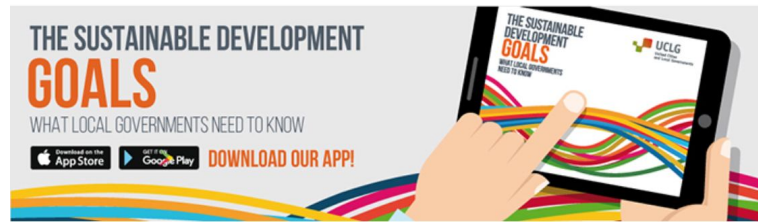
When you are planning group activities, make a habit of including the SDGs in your branding and promotion.

5. Write to local government to highlight the Goals.

Bring the SDGs to the attention of local councillors by writing to tell them that you support them and would like to see them acted upon through your local council. You can highlight what efforts you would personally like to see, and what goals those efforts would cover (**Example:** supporting local organic food production and achieving fair price for produce, would be covered by SDG 2 Zero Hunger, 3 Good Health and Wellbeing, 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth, 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities, 12 Responsible Consumption and Production, 13 Climate Action, 15 Life on Land.) You can encourage them to



become more familiar with the goals by sending them a link to the [SDGs app aimed at local councils](#), and the [PDF version 'The Sustainable Development Goals - What Local Governments Need to Know.'](#)



6. Lobby politicians for change using the SDGs as leverage.

The government has committed to delivering on the SDGs. Use your knowledge of the SDGs to add leverage to your campaigns.

Example: For instance, to take an example from the actions mentioned at the workshop, let's say your campaign is calling for a moratorium to be put on pesticide use. Your arguments for such a moratorium can be framed in the common language of the SDGs; Ensuring good health and wellbeing (SDG 3) by moving away from the negative health effects of pesticide on our food. Reduced pesticide use has been proven to promote healthy life on land (SDG 15). Protecting life below water (SDG 14) by reducing runoff of chemicals into our rivers and streams.



7. Inform the media of environmental actions and issues.

The lack of media coverage was mentioned as a roadblock to awareness. There is a general lack of media coverage for environmental matters. It was recommended that everyone at this conference write a letter to their local newspaper and radio station to ask them to increase coverage of environmental matters. You could include the SDGs in this letter. In particular, it was suggested that the President's speech at the recent National Biodiversity Conference be brought to the attention of the media. You can [watch the speech in its entirety here](#). You can also watch the [entire event here](#).

8. Open a dialogue with a group who you would not usually work with.



Use the SDGs as a common language to further the conversation. Try find common goals and see what can be done together to work towards achieving them. Partnership for the Goals (SDG 17) is a huge part of the solution. Conversation and communication is vital, and we must all work together. Reframe your language. Find benefits from different perspectives and frame your environmental goals with profit and social resilience goals.

9. Action for PPNs:

Public Participation Network's can engage in the above aspects such as branding themselves with the SDGs, framing their work in the context of the SDGs, they can add the SDGs to their application forms for new groups joining the PPNs, they can ask members who are applying for funding to tick which SDGs the project is addressing.

10. Create incentive and highlight benefits

What are the benefits for all parties in your chosen campaign/project? Lead with the benefits, not with the doom.

11. Buy in from companies and top management

Use the SDGs and highlight benefits of creating change in your workplace.

Example: Many companies are getting behind the message of reducing single use coffee cups, buying reusable cups to give to their employees and getting rid of plastic cups at drinking fountains. With everyone taking personal responsibility for their own cup, they do not have to wash mugs. The Conscious Cup Campaign

has lots of info on making the switch, and resources too. See their [Corporate Cup Campaign](#) for a guide on introducing reusable cups into your workplace.

12. Buy in from companies and top management

Example: Invest in carbon reductive practices instead of carbon credit. Find out what your company has already achieved or is planning, and build on their current knowledge. Show companies the cost benefits of investing in renewable energy, low energy appliances, reusable alternatives to plastic waste, a [food waste digester](#) if you work in the food/hotel industry, reducing paper waste in printer use.

13. Communicate through media

Use social media to amplify your message. Facebook can take a lot of time to get to know if you are not already familiar with it, but Twitter is easier to manage. Display your groups actions. The more people who see you are a group who gets things done, the more people will want to join in. If you are hosting local events, contact local radio stations and newspapers to let them know.

14. Host a 'Stop Food Waste Challenge' workshop

Running over 4 weeks for a one hour workshop per week, these workshops are offered free of charge from Stop Food Waste. Gather a group of approx 12-15 participants. To book, contact Betty Kehoe on 086 4007993 or email betty@stopfoodwaste.ie See www.stopfoodwaste.ie



15. Poster Free Elections

A recent campaign to encourage areas to forgo the use of plastic election posters is gaining momentum. You can join the initiative by encouraging candidates not to use posters, and collaborate with local groups and councils to put poster free agreements in place. See posterfree.ie for more info. One project which aims to give an alternative platform for candidates is www.candidates.ie.



Expanding the Conversation - Community Initiatives

Facilitated by Ray McGrath

Workshop overview:

The purpose of this workshop was to identify a range of environmental actions that community groups and activists can undertake within an agreed time. Expanding the conversation within and towards groups that so far have not been seen as having an environmental remit was an underlying aim of the workshop. The potential of Laudato Si, the 2015 encyclical of Pope Francis, was an example explored by the workshop as an additional vehicle for expanding the conversation to hitherto excluded groups.

These actions were chosen during the workshop as they do not need any major funding to implement them. We would encourage all of you to choose two actions to pursue within your community groups, and to put a time frame on achieving them. Map out who is to do what task and by when.

Turning ideas into action:

During the workshop, attendees pinpointed many actions that can be taken by groups and individuals in order to expand the conversation and create positive environmental change. These are listed below. The workshop encourages you and your group to choose two of these, and create a timeline for achieving them.

Resource: Attendees at this workshop highlighted actions for pollinators in many of their actions. The best information available on all things pollinator comes from the All Ireland



Pollinator Plan, created by the National Biodiversity Data Centre in Wexford. [View their full site here.](#) They have pollinator plans targeted at different areas of the community, information for councils, inspiring videos of successful examples across Ireland, educational signs and flyers, how-to guides, and the ability to record pollinator sightings, as well as map your actions for pollinators. Printed copies of the plans are available from the Data Centre.

1. Use your PPN.

Communication is key to expanding the conversation across sectors. Join your group up to your local Public Participation Network, and use it to spread word of your actions to all other groups in the PPN. Join yours at the following links: [Kilkenny](#), [Tipperary](#), [Wexford](#), [Waterford](#), [Carlow](#).

2. Reach out to other stakeholders.

As well as using the PPN to reach others, you could locate and reach out to other stakeholders personally; schools, churches, parish council, [Eco-Congregation](#), book clubs, councilors, [TDs](#), [Tidy Towns](#), fishermen, farmers, Residents

Associations, women's groups, Men's Sheds, Community Development groups and any others you can think of. Your actions work best when more people are invited to take part.

3. Persuade County Councils to stop roundup use.

With the local elections coming up, this could be something that everyone who attended the conference could bring up with their local candidates when they knock on their doors this election season. Consider an email campaign targeted at your Local Authority. Take action through the PPN by talking to your SPC rep and the PPN Resource Worker. **Action for PPNs:** SPC reps could start lobbying for this immediately within each council.

4. Reduce grass cutting and change mowing regimes to increase biodiversity

“Say no to mow”. Aimed at Resident Associations, Churches, Tidy Towns, IFA and Community Groups to encourage wildlife and pollinators; letting green areas/verges grow wild. Put up signs to explain why the grass is being allowed to grow. For pollinator friendly plans targeted at specific groups, and signage for biodiversity areas, see the [All Ireland Pollinator Plan](#).

5. Increase biodiversity

Pollinator friendly perennial planting can replace annual planting in public areas. For a list of pollinator friendly perennials [click here](#).

6. Community planting of verges in rural areas

Apple, gooseberry could work on some roadsides.

Note: Coillte are offering fruit trees at a low cost (€1 each) to plant in local areas through [FIBKA](#)

(Beekeepers). Also see [Easy Treesie](#) who offer

trees for planting in schools, [Trees on the Land](#)

who offer cheap tree packs every February for

community planting. For individual trees, [Future](#)

[Forests](#) run a nursery which provides individually

priced trees, grown in an ethical and sustainable



Tree Council
of Ireland

manner. Local garden centres are also known to donate trees to community initiatives. See [this list from the Tree Council of Ireland](#) of what trees suit which locations. They advocate for 'the right tree in the right place'. This year, [National Tree Week](#) runs from March 31st till April 7th. The Tree Council of Ireland has some [ideas outlined](#) for how you can celebrate it. [Open Orchard](#) is a project highlighted on ChangeX which gives resources and information on how to plant and maintain a community orchard.

7. Hold a community planting day for points 5 and 6 above.

Increase biodiversity, target individuals, invite neighbours, overcome social isolation. Take ownership of an area in your community; 'Adopt a Plot'. Get in touch with the council and ask them not to spray your adopted plot.

8. Target single use plastics

Target events eg Athletics, goodie bags, schools etc. Get feedback from targeted group. [Zero Waste Cashel](#) is a very successful example of how community members worked with local businesses to reduce the towns waste creation. [Zero Waste Ireland](#) Facebook Group is a very active and welcoming group whose members have avast amount of combined knowledge on plastic alternatives and how to reduce your waste creation. Also on Facebook, there is the local [Zero Waste Community Kilkenny](#). [Zero Waste Wexford](#), and the [Zero Waste Festival](#) being held in Carlow this April.

9. Single use plastics in schools.

Plastic Free 4 Schools is a programme to help schools to go plastic free, through 3 plastic free asks, and in turn, act as ambassadors for change in their communities. It has been designed by *Change by Degrees* and tested through *Plastic Free Kinsale* - a community initiative to free a whole town from single use plastic. In its first year, primary schools all over the country have signed up to start the *Plastic Free 4 Schools* journey. Read more about *Plastic Free 4 Schools* [here](#). There is lots of info on how to get started in schools near you, and resources too. This project has been run through ChangeX.

10. Peer to peer learning.

This was highlighted as especially useful for farmers. [Farming for Nature](#) is a group that highlights sustainable farming practices in Ireland, with interviews and awards every year. [The Bride Project](#) is an innovative agri-environment project based in the River Bride catchment of Cork and Waterford. These could both provide valuable experiences, resources or speakers for expanding the conversation to other farmers in your area.

11. Lobby, email, petition.

Come together to lobby over shared interests. Use the Sustainable Development Goals as a common language to begin conversations (see SDG workshop outcomes above).

12. Actions for PPNs: The PPNs in each county can encourage all of these actions at minimal costs through Tidy Towns groups and Resident Associations as well as lobbying Council and Councillors to do likewise. It was suggested that they do this locally rather than collectively.

13. Local Explorers - Reconnecting with nature through exploration.

[Local Explorers](#) is an annual programme of monthly walks and talks aimed at connecting each of us more closely with our community and our place. Simple to set up, it can work in any location, urban or rural, and all members of the community are welcome to come along to some or all of the 6 summer walks and 6 winter talks over the year. This idea is highlighted on ChangeX, and has been successfully implemented by the BurrenBeo Trust.

14. Action for Climate during elections.

Expand the conversation by talking to your neighbours. The IEN has created posters that you can use to help with this. The idea behind the posters is that each household would have one on display for candidates to see when they are canvassing. As an individual or a group, you could print these off, knock around to your neighbours, and have a conversation about how they feel the locality is

being affected. Ask them to bring these issues up with their candidates, and to display one of the posters in their window.



[Download A4 posters here.](#)

[Download A5 posters here.](#)



Water Catchments - Local Responses to Climate Action

Facilitated by Fran Igoe

Workshop discussion overview:

Our rivers and lakes are of huge importance to the health of our land and communities. How can we work to improve the quality of our water sources, the life that they nourish, and the habitats that they provide for? Local waters are connected within geographical areas called catchments, it is this connection that requires us to adopt a broader view of the water environment.

This workshop identified areas where there are issues in water catchment areas, and addressed the larger issues of climate breakdown within these areas.

Some of the issues which came across during the workshop were:

Not enough is being done by agencies and that agencies such as NPWS need to be adequately resourced. All are underfunded and operating in silos. They need more Wildlife Rangers.

Biodiversity and water management are not taken seriously and there needs to be better awareness. Current loss of wetlands and ponds.

The loss of hedgerows is a big problem and no one is taking ownership of the issue and dealing with it properly. These are vital for pollinators and biodiversity and also help with water management

Forestry/Coillte fell trees without consultation. This is an issue not only for biodiversity but also flooding. Big problem for example on the Mountain River Co Carlow. Sitka spruce are not native and it would be better to have deciduous trees and continuous tree cover.

Needs to be a management plan for soil erosion. Current incentives for damaging farming practices are also an issue, as are bad habits when it comes to pesticides. Schemes should be developed to reward farmers for looking after nature.

Creating an awareness of the value of biodiversity is possible through positive, educational interactions. Host events that highlight biodiversity, get out in nature and get others out too, talk to people, bring event ideas to Tidy Towns groups, get support from the council, organise school outings and community walks. Discuss the restoration of nature. Your passion is what will get others excited about a subject, so be passionate!

Turning ideas into action:

We have identified some actions and resources below that you can carry out as individuals or in community groups. Citizen Science was mentioned many times during this workshop, and there are already various schemes in place that you can get involved with. Data is hugely important for understanding the current state of habitats in

Ireland, of water health and quality, of the health of the soil, and of wildlife populations. Though Citizen Science is currently underfunded and under-valued, it has a major role to play in proving damaging practices, holding companies accountable, locating key areas for habitat protection and restoration, and more.

1. Find your water catchment

Find out where your catchment is, read stories of successful projects in Ireland, and more at catchments.ie.

2. Citizen Science for River Nore, and training for monitoring water quality

At the end of the workshop Fran made people aware of the [NOREvision project](#) and collaborations between stakeholders in the Nore catchment and the planned citizen science project for the River Nore. This will be a catchment wide project, where people will be trained on how to monitor water quality using the water bugs in the river and a special pond net. The project will involve expertise from LAWPRO and the EPA and we encourage anyone interested to contact Fran (figoe@lawco.ie) with their details which he can pass onto the project organisers. This project should begin in late spring 2019 focusing on 5 areas (to be determined) for the River Nore and its tributaries.

3. Citizen Science to cover biodiversity data gaps

Currently, the National Biodiversity Data Centre takes all submissions for recording biodiversity. [You can start recording here](#). They also have [maps available](#) where you can view the current populations of all creatures. For whales, dolphins and sharks you can submit sightings to the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group [here](#). (Note from Fran Igoe LAWPRO: please note that the NORE Vision Kilkenny Leader Partnership are planning a large scale aquatic macroinvertebrate citizen science programme for the Nore and encourage people to put their names forward if they are interested. Contact Fran if you are interested in taking part).

4. Citizen Science for soil

The [GROW Observatory](#) is dedicated to better soil management and food growing practices across Europe. They are looking for people to help monitor soil health by placing soil sensors in your land. These are small sensors which need some soil to be left alone in for a time. The 'Champion' for the South East is Dee Sewell from Carlow. If you are interested in giving a soil sensor a home and contributing valuable data about our soil, please get in touch at dee@greensideup.ie. You could link this in with other actions for soil, such as hosting a film screening of '[Symphony of the Soil](#)', or a community planting day. Note: For counteracting soil erosion along river banks, willow is a good choice.

5. Citizen Science for plastic waste

Document litter in Ireland with the [Open Litter Map](#). By creating a database of litter in the country, we can help call out companies who are major contributors, locate areas where more bins are needed, document hotspots for fly tipping, show the major contributors of waste such as smoking related litter and target the reduction of these major contributors.

6. Other Citizen Science projects

For more projects [see this list](#) from the Environmental Protection Agency.

7. Adopt a Pond or create a town pond

Take ownership of a pond in your area. Measure the quantity of biodiversity of life, note it's connectivity to other existing bodies of water (closest streams, gullies, ponds, swales, ditches, lakes.)

8. Get support for your projects

If you have an idea for a project or initiative, no matter how big or small, and don't know where to begin, the Local Authority Waters Programme can provide support, technical information and funding. [Contact your local officer](#) or email info@lawaters.ie.

9. Tackle pollution

Organise a community litter pick for your local waters.

10. Tackle pollution

Take it a step further. Learn how to test the quality of the water in your area, and find local sources of pollution. The Rivers Trust has great resources for community groups to learn how to test water quality. One such project is the [Outfall Safari](#), where they provide resources to locate sites of urban river pollution from outfall pipes, and engage people to fix the problem at source.

11. Get schools involved

School groups can take part in litter picks and planting days. Get teachers involved and host guest speakers on subjects before going out with students. An idea from the [Rivers Trust](#) is to give children the opportunity to hatch and care for fish (native and locally sourced) in the classroom. This process gave a huge learning opportunity to the students, who were taught about the fish and the importance of a healthy habitat, as well as what they can do to keep the local waters pollution free. They named their fish, and released them into the local waters. The messages of how to curb pollution in the home were then brought home as students told their parents how to keep their wild fish friends happy and healthy.

12. Work with Dairy coops to help find solutions

You could help with signage and outreach to look after biodiversity. (Note from Fran Igoe LAWPRO: Dairy Coops are working with LAWPRO under the Agricultural Sustainability Support and Advisory Programme to improve water quality in targeted Areas for Action under the River Basin Management Plan – more info at www.waterandcommunities.ie).



Actions for Biodiversity

Facilitated by Pádraic Fogarty

Workshop discussion overview:

This workshop gave an overview of the current threats to biodiversity in Ireland, the challenges that habitats are facing, and the importance of creating healthy habitats where humans and wildlife can co-exist. Attendees discussed what can be done to promote biodiversity at a local level, and what can be achieved in the short and long term. Together they came up with a list of simple actions that can be taken through individual and community initiatives.

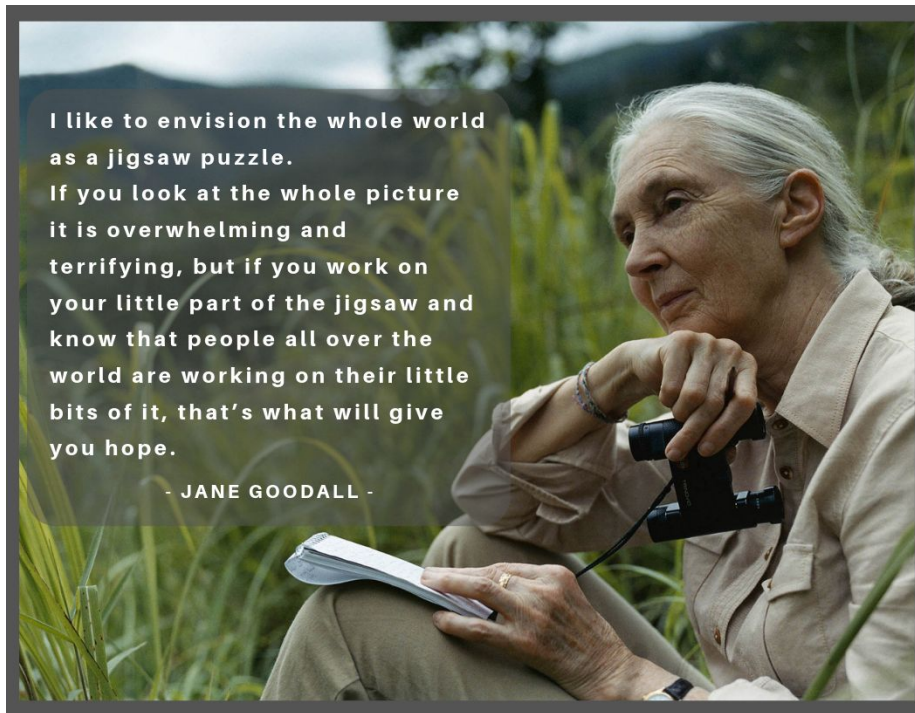
Having local conversations is something that came up again and again throughout the day, and this workshop was no different. Talking to people from across all sectors, sharing stories and successes, inviting diverse groups to take part in your actions, approaching groups who you don't usually work with. See the outcomes from *'Sustainable Development Goals'* workshop above for ideas on how to use a common

language to approach difficult topics, and the *'Expanding the Conversation - Community Initiatives'* workshop for ideas of other community groups and stakeholders to contact.

A disconnect from nature and a lack of opportunity to engage with nature was mentioned as a major roadblock to valuing biodiversity. Lack of awareness of the biodiversity we have, and of what we are losing, means that many people simply do not know the scale of the issue. There is a lack of awareness in all levels of society. However, those who do delve into it can be overwhelmed by the enormity of the problems, and can find it hard to know what they can do. This leads to some people disengaging from the conversation, as it is seen as too difficult and too big to deal with. To communicate messages effectively, we need to understand each other's point of view. [Here is a video](#) that highlights this aspect of communicating climate change. Education is needed at all levels, from early age to councillors.

Issues raised were many and paint a bleak picture; We face a plastic epidemic, destruction of hedgerows, bee population in danger and an insect crisis, exhausted land and infertile soil, pesticide/herbicide contamination with cancer and health effects, indiscriminate felling of trees without consultation, lowest tree cover in Europe, farmers locked into a system, we can't feed ourselves, not enough organic farmers, overuse of pesticides by statutory bodies eg Local Authorities, inadequate public transport, on the verge of environmental collapse.

However, it was also mentioned that there is more traction developing surrounding these conversations, and your actions can help this develop too. Local farming people's conversations are changing and people now talk about environmental issues. It was mentioned at the workshop that there is now more media coverage than before of environmental issues, more public discourse, and it is being taught in schools to a certain degree. There is always room for more of this, but these developments are cause for hope.



'Tidiness' was pinpointed as a concept which must be challenged. It was mentioned that people have difficulty in convincing others that wildflower areas are necessary and beautiful. The value placed on manicured lawns is one example of what was mentioned as 'misplaced priorities'. We need to understand the importance of pollinators, and not just pay lip service to the All Ireland Pollinator Plan. One way that space can be given to turn wild while not looking unkempt, is to keep a strip at the edge that is kept trim and manicured. This could be a good stepping stone for changing outlooks.



Not having the right of way and right to walk were mentioned as barriers to connecting to nature.

Using people power and a bottom up approach was a championed solution. Change has to come from top down as well, but grassroots actions hold huge potential. Taking personal responsibility was mentioned at this workshop as well.

On a country level, we need a greener environment, reduced emissions, changed farming methods and farmers paid fair price for environmental efforts, we need CAP and government support for High Nature Value farming, funding for citizen and local level initiatives, to replace every tree the council cuts down, to enhance existing infrastructure such as Greenways, to move towards zero waste, to recycle more and reduce production of waste, for there to be more accountability for damaging practices, legally preserved and protected green spaces, we need more environmental officers, national policy on the environment/biodiversity/pesticides, more action on planting for pollinators, for biodiversity values to be included in all media such as soaps, and we need to be realistic in what we can and should do.

Many actions mentioned above in the previous workshops were also mentioned in this one. In particular, pollinator friendly planting ideas which have been set out under the actions in *'Expanding the Conversation - Community Initiatives'*, and citizen science projects which were explored under the *'Water Catchments - Local Responses to Climate Action'*. Please look at these lists of actions for more ideas for increasing biodiversity.

Turning ideas into action:

1. For actions surrounding **pollinator friendly planting**, see actions 3 - 7 in the 'Turning Ideas into Actions' section under the workshop *'Expanding the Conversation - Community Initiatives'*.

2. Hold a film screening

'[Symphony of the Soil](#)' is available to rent cheaply for community screenings. It portrays the importance of healthy soil for the earth and for us. [Films for Action](#) is a website which hosts a huge amount of films on activism topics, many of which can be viewed for free. Currently on [Netflix](#) there are some good documentaries, including *Period - End of a Sentence*, *A Plastic Ocean*, and *Sustainable*.

3. Citizen Science for soil

(As mentioned above) The [GROW Observatory](#) is dedicated to better soil management and food growing practices across Europe. They are looking for people to help monitor soil health by placing soil sensors in your land. They are small sensors which need some soil to be left alone in for a time. The 'Champion' for the South East is Dee Sewell from Carlow. If you are interested in giving a soil sensor a home and contributing valuable data about our soil, please get in touch at dee@greensideup.ie. You could link this in with other actions for soil, such as hosting a film screening of '[Symphony of the Soil](#)', or a community planting day.

4. Begin locally

[The Bride Project](#) could provide a blueprint for sustainable action. Another resource which includes case studies is the [Community Biodiversity Toolkit](#), created by Ennis Tidy Towns.

5. Farmers Bee Corridor/Town Bee Corridor

Engage farmers in the All Ireland Pollinator plan. Use the map on the website to plot actions and see where pollinator friendly areas can be joined, creating a corridor for pollinators across farms and communities. [See resources here.](#)

6. Hedge cutting

Take ownership and authority back to residents. If you are a part of a residents association or Tidy Towns groups, take ownership of your local hedgerows. Get in touch with the council to tell them how you want your section managed. Develop your strategy for hedgerow care in line with the All Ireland Pollinator Plan, and ask the council not to spray pesticides along your stretch of hedgerow.

If you want to plant a hedge and are looking for assistance, experienced hedge layers can be found through the [Hedge Laying Association of Ireland](#).

7. Persuade all County Councils to stop spraying RoundUp and other herbicides

Find out where they are at in relation to this, petition/email councillors, Patrick's Parade anti roundup, leafleting, presentation to County Council, workshop on organics, protect green places and give examples, provide alternatives, point out contradictions. You can [read this article](#) for some ideas on alternatives to herbicide use being explored by Dublin City Council.

8. Climate Strike Ireland #FridaysforFuture

Students have been striking every Friday outside Leinster House in Dublin since before Christmas to demand action for climate. The biggest strike was a global event on Friday 15th March, but they are continuing every Friday outside the Dáil. All ages are welcome. See the [Facebook Group here](#). Not all schools can or will strike. Use Fridays for Future to do other climate actions with school groups; film screenings, school outings, educational speakers etc. See some suggestions for #FridaysforFuture actions [here](#).

9. Communicate with GAA clubs

Ask GAA to make pitches and walk-arounds more biodiverse.

10. Communicate with faith communities

[Explore the actions](#) that faith communities can make. Reach out to them and help them reach those goals.

11. Promote the health benefits of thriving biodiversity and contact with the natural world

[Irish Doctors for Environment](#) is a branch of doctors in Ireland who aim to create awareness, interest and implement action around environment health and the impact it has on our patients' health. They strive to support initiatives from local community level to policy change and implementation at a national and

international level. They are looking for anyone in the health profession to get in touch.

12. Action for PPNs

PPNs have a vital role to play in addressing many of these issues with the Local Authorities. Those involved in SPCs can begin to lobby for pesticide ban and pollinator friendly planting and mowing regimes immediately. If you are not involved in an SPC personally, get in touch with your SPC rep and ask them to raise it at their next meeting.

13. Use your purchasing power

Reduce plastic waste by avoiding buying it. This can be tricky. For more details see Action 8 in the workshop '*Expanding the Conversation - Community Initiatives*'.

14. Call out plastic producers

[Open Litter Map](#) is a citizen science project mentioned above, which is useful in gathering data to expose the biggest culprits of plastic pollution. [The Plastic Letters Project](#) is a recently begun project in West Cork which targets one brand at a time, and aims to use consumer pressure to change the practices of corporations. They give template letters that you can send too to amplify the message to corporations.

15. Talk to your local farmers

Start a conversation with your local farmer. Listen to their experiences and ask them what schemes are already available. Talk to farmers who are leading the way in Ireland, such as the [Bride Project](#), or those involved with [High Nature Value farming](#).

16. Adopt a Plot, or [start a Community Garden](#).

Stallholders

Public Participation Networks

The Public participation Network (PPN) was created to give communities the opportunity to have their voice heard in local council decisions. Any charity or not-for-profit group can join, and there are many benefits in doing so. As a member of your PPN, you will receive information such as events in the county, funding opportunities and public consultations. The PPN also provides networking opportunities, and an easy way to share your events and invite other groups to join in. By joining the PPN, you give all of your group's members the opportunity to give input and create motions for the County Council.

Find your PPN here: [Carlow](#), [Kilkenny](#), [Wexford](#), [Waterford](#), [Tipperary](#). [Other PPNs](#).

Local Environmental Networks

Local Environmental Networks (LENs) are made up of individuals with interests in a wide range of environmental issues. They provide a central hub around which people from a given county can gather, discuss projects, ask for help, create change and become involved in their local Public Participation Network.

All around the country LENs are being used to bring people together, create meaningful projects for the local community, and impact the wider surroundings.

[Find your Local EN here](#)

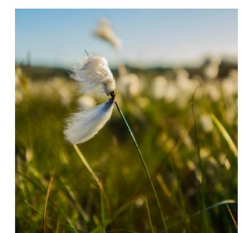


Find your
**LOCAL
ENVIRONMENTAL
NETWORK**

Connect, Communicate,
Collaborate

Get involved in local action through your Local Environmental Network. Your hub for all environmental and sustainability issues!

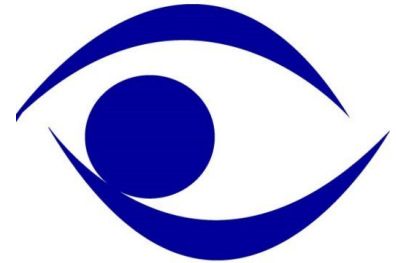
Use it to share experience, learn more about your area, ask questions, and work together to create change.



EMAIL LEN@IEN.IE TO FIND YOUR LOCAL NETWORK

Coastwatch

Coastwatch Europe is an international network of environmental groups, universities and other educational institutions, who in turn work with local groups and individuals around the coast of Europe. Coastwatch Ireland aims for informed public participation in environmental protection and management, especially in the coastal zone. Its Coastwatch survey now used in 23 European countries involves local volunteers recording coastal information and acting on the findings both locally and nationally. These surveys carried out around the country are designed to give an overview of the state of the coast. It involves volunteers from all walks of life checking their chosen 500m stretch of coast (survey unit) once around low tide, and jotting observations down on the survey questionnaire while on the shore. Data is then collected and pooled to provide a snapshot of state in areas surveyed at that time. For more details [click here](#). They also have initiatives surrounding seaweed education, microlitter, work surrounding wetlands and more.



Stop Food Waste

[Stop Food Waste](#) highlights how to reduce your food waste through various methods, as well as the issues surrounding why it is important to be conscious about our food supply. They offer workshops to community groups of 12 - 15 people. Running over 4 weeks for a one hour workshop per week, these workshops are offered free of charge from Stop Food

Waste. To book contact Betty Kehoe on 086 4007993 or email betty@stopfoodwaste.ie.



Kilkenny Leader Partnership

Kilkenny LEADER Partnership (KLP) is a non profit, independent, community-led, local development organisation, with almost 25 years of experience delivering to communities on the ground, providing a wide range of services including training, work placements, grants and advice. [Visit their website here.](#)

Seal Rescue Ireland

Seal Rescue Ireland is the country's only seal rescue, rehabilitation and release centre. We are a volunteer run organisation whose work focuses on both reactive and proactive conservation. We respond to calls about sick, injured or abandoned seal pups all around the country thanks to our network of 900+ trained volunteers. However, we could not do this work without our education, outreach and community engagement programmes. We endeavor to connect as many people with nature as possible through science-based conservation and highlight how people can make positive change in their lives, that benefits both humans and the environment.



If anyone would like to reach out and collaborate on a project please contact us at info@sealrescueireland.org. We run school tours on site for Primary and Secondary level and love to bring our conservation message out to schools/community groups through our SFI accredited Marine Conservation Roadshow or Ecobrick workshops! Our rehabilitation centre and gift shop is located in Courtown Co Wexford and open 7 days a week to the public. www.sealrescueireland.org

Zero waste Cashel

To promote sustainable consumption and waste prevention in Cashel through reducing waste, reuse, repair, recycling, composting etc.

Zero Waste Cashel is a pilot project of VOICE (Voice of Concern for the Irish Environment)

Duncannon's Green Community

Community-wide Cooperation and Partnership key to resolving water quality issues. The Duncannon project is one of a number of Department of Agriculture innovation partnerships designed to road-test new ideas and practices which can then be used more widely by farmers and others to improve productivity, enhance resource efficiency and pursue sustainable farming practices, and in this case to demonstrate how good agriculture practices can help minimise impact on local water quality.

The initiative will see implementation of innovative practices, based on research carried out by the Teagasc Agricultural Catchments Programme. It will see the mapping each and every farm and farmyard, the identification of any pollution potential zones 'PPZ' and then using them as education and engagement tools to show farmers in a simple visual way, the water-quality risks specific to their farms. The project will also involve local farmers themselves collaboratively proposing solutions to problems identified on their farms which are workable and which they are willing to implement. These solutions would also be used as the basis for a water-quality focused, results-based, reward scheme which could be used to improve water-quality in particularly sensitive catchments.



Three Counties Energy Agency

3cea are a non-profit, independent energy agency working primarily in Carlow, Kilkenny and Wexford. They have a voluntary Board of Directors drawn from the private, public and community sectors. As an independent agency their job is to help you reach your energy goals, not to sell you a product. 3 Counties Energy Agency is supporting investment in the low carbon economy through people and business for economic growth. 3cea.ie

Kilnerin Sustainable Energy Community

Informing the community about sustainable energy options, and running the annual [Kilnerin Sustainability Fair](#), this is only one of many Sustainable Energy Communities (SECs) in Ireland. Find your nearest SEC or learn how to set up your own [here](#).

Heritage Officer

The Heritage Office provides advice and information on heritage issues; develops policies and priorities for the identification, protection, conservation and enhancement of Kilkenny's heritage; collects and collates heritage data, and promotes and supports heritage awareness & education throughout the county. A key objective is to work with the Kilkenny Heritage Forum in the preparation and implementation of the County Heritage Plan and the County Biodiversity Plan.

- More info on heritage officers: heritagecouncil.ie
- Kilkenny Heritage Officer: Dearbhala Ledwidge <dearbhala.ledwidge@kilkennycoco.ie>
- Wexford Heritage Officer: Position vacant
- Waterford Heritage Officer: Bernadette Guest <bguest@waterfordcoco.ie>
- Carlow Heritage Officer: Position vacant
- Tipperary Heritage Officer: Roisin O'Grady <roisin.ogrady@tipperarycoco.ie>
- [Other Heritage Officers](#)

Local Authorities Waters Programme

The programme is a shared service working with Local Authorities and state agencies to develop and implement River Basin Management Plans in Ireland, as required under the EU Water Framework Directive. The core focus of this work is to protect and improve water quality in rivers, lakes, groundwater, estuaries and coastal waters. Good water quality, and a healthy water environment, is vital for human health and a myriad of wildlife. It is also underpins the economy and supports local jobs in sectors such as tourism, agriculture and manufacturing. If you would like to get involved in protecting and managing your local stream, river, lake, coast or groundwater just contact this office for further information. Contact details can be found on the [Team](#) section of their [website](#).

An Gairdín Beo

An Gairdín Beo is a two-acre community garden in the centre of Carlow town where people work together then reap the rewards together. The overall vision of the project is of a space in which diverse people can connect more to nature, to the growing and making of food and to each other.

www.angairdinbeo.org



Drummin Bog Project

The Drummin Bog Project is a voluntary not-for-profit community education project to restore the only raised bog in Co. Carlow. Situated in the South East of Ireland, close to the River Barrow and the historical site of St. Mullins, the Drummin Bog Project was formed in 2015 to restore and preserve this unique natural heritage. Find out more:

www.drumminbog.com

Cabragh Wetlands Trust

The Trust was formed and acquired the land adjacent to the filled-in lagoons to ensure the continuation of this resting place for migratory birds.

The Centre is run by a group of committed volunteers who provide exciting field trips for children and adults of all ages. The Wetlands have no less than 15 different habitats including ponds, reed swamps, hedgerows, streams and wild flower meadows.



South Tipperary Development Company

Our mission is to contribute towards the improvement of the social, 'socio-economic' and economic circumstances of targeted individuals, groups and communities within the area through the implementation of a number of Rural Development and Social Inclusion Programmes.

Suircan Clonmel

Suircan seeks to develop the River Suir and its immediate environs in and around Clonmel as an environmental recreational asset for the town.

Initiatives include the Clonmel Apple Fest, and Clonmel Repair Café.

www.clonmelapplefest.ie

highlights video 2018:

<https://youtu.be/G4t-iPeFxmY>

Facebook: @clonmelapplefest

Twitter: @clonmelapplfe1



Tipperary Green Business Network

Tipperary Green Business Network is a network of businesses that combine to share experience and expertise in resource efficiency. The network is driven by the ethos of people, planet and profit which is central to everything we do. We are advocates of responsible business activity within the community and are committed to building and maintaining strong businesses through innovation and optimum performance.

Cultivate

Cultivate is based in Cloughjordan Eco Village, which offers courses in a range of areas related to climate change, building, sustainability and community. Their upcoming Permaculture Design Course is a ten day course taking place in August. [See here for more details](#). Also highlighted at this event was the On Farm Seed Saving Course taking place in [April](#) and [October](#).

Other Resources

Clann Credo

Clann Credo is a not for profit organisation with charitable status who offer loan finance by way of Bridging and Term Loan facilities to the Community and voluntary sector. Projects are assessed by way of Repayment Capacity (Grant Funding or sustainable income/Fundraising) and Social dividends/Rewards to the community. We are part funded by the Irish Social Finance Foundation since 2007.

Martina O'Moore is the Social Finance Executive covering Offaly, Longford and Westmeath. They have representatives covering all regions within the 26 counties.

Website: www.clanncredo.ie

Telephone head office: +353 (0)1 400 2100

Community Finance

Community Finance (Ireland), is a registered Charity which provides loans exclusively to other third sector organisations such as community groups, charities, sports clubs and social enterprises in the Republic of Ireland. In the last 2 years they have invested over €16m into 150+ projects. For more information see; www.communityfinance.ie Email Barry Symes <barrysymes@communityfinance.ie>