

FINGAL PPN CLIMATE CONVERSATION WORKSHOP 7TH APRIL 2021



**Fingal
Public
Participation
Network**

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Organisations / groups which contributed to the discussion:

Balbriggan Tidy Towns

Ballyboughal Hedgerow Society

Children4worldchildren

CICI - Confederation of Indian Communities in Ireland

Donabate/Portrane Active Age for All

Fingal Environmental Network

Howth Yacht Club

Howth/Sutton Community Council

Lusk Community Council

Portmarnock Beach Clean Coast

Portmarnock Community Association

Portmarnock Sustainable Energy Community

Portmarnock Tidy Towns

Rush Tourism

Sustainable Skerries

Swords Tidy Towns

The Bold Woman Association

The Links Residents Association Donabate/Portrane

Woodland Park Residents Association

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1. CURRENT ACTION & AMBITIONS: INITIATIVES AND IDEAS

a. FOOD:

i. Initiatives Working Well:

Local Food Festivals.

Home baking needs to be encouraged: as well as being a healthy source of food it reduces the amount of processed food being consumed.

Healthy Menu Initiative in school canteens, and banning fizzy drinks machines from the premises.

Charity food collection service and appeals in the supermarkets for Christmas.

Gardening courses e.g., on organic fruit & vegetable growing.

Local allotments: the growing of one's own vegetables should be encouraged as a means of providing fresh organic food and as a healthy lifestyle hobby.

Direct farm sales to public – either as direct produce or in conjunction with Kid Farm Visits.

ii. New Ideas

Initiative to encourage **more local/seasonal food consumption**, preferably plant-based which would decrease the emission of climate gases, such as a “meat-free Monday choice” in local restaurants and take-aways.

Supermarkets to provide a **designated section for food grown and produced within County or Local Authority area**, or defined radius.

Local Farmers Markets once a month on areas provided by Local Authority.

Stagger timing of local markets, rotate to different location each week.

Encourage **food waste composting** - Local Authorities to provide a small Home Garden Composting Bin, so waste food can be used as garden fertiliser.

Explore the possibility of introducing **regenerative** and expanding **organic farming**.

All trees in new housing developments, or trees being replaced in existing local areas **should provide food: e.g., apple, pear, and plum trees.**

Standardise plastic food containers so they will stack in each other.

b. ENVIRONMENT:

i. Initiatives Working Well:

Air Quality Monitoring: station updates every 2-5 minutes with the calculated Air Quality Index for Health, and the Air Quality Map shows if air quality is good, fair, poor, or very poor.

Green funding received by Educate Together National School to produce compost, rainwater harvesting, vegetable growing, increasing biodiversity, ceasing the brown bin collection, and composting their own waste food. Also planning to install increased rainwater harvesting and wildlife cameras.

Tidy Towns - an excellent countrywide organisation which is altering perspective to include the natural environment, which should be supported

Biodiversity Action Plans are being developed by Tidy Towns groups in cooperation with the Local Authority and consultant ecologists.

Nature reserve where a number of trees have been planted.

Wild gardens instead of manicured lawns - cultivating wildflowers and grasses must be encouraged as a means of attracting insects and other wildlife.

Bee Corridor Officer in the Local Authority.

Managing for Nature: Rewilding some sections of local parks; not cutting grass verges in some areas.

“Clean coasts” clean-ups and dune grass planting, promoting resilience of coastal protection.

Coastal Protection: Local Community Associations liaising with Local Authority.

All-Ireland Pollinator Plan and **Fresh Air Fridays** - reduced mowing is a simple but highly effective measure to support pollinators. Local Authorities are gradually reducing mowing and planting pollinator friendly floral displays.

Local allotments provide locally grown food and support pollinators on the outskirts of towns.

Remote working hubs support employees and the self-employed to work locally, reducing or eliminating commutes.

Local Authorities **financing small-scale community lead biodiversity projects.**

Community-led native tree planting initiatives by charities and businesses (i.e., Easytreesie, PocketForests).

Seabins and straining boat washings in marinas and harbours.

ii. NEW IDEAS

Promote use of **outdoor washing lines** and **ceiling clothes airers/driers** to reduce the use of tumble driers – not a new idea, but the present generation don't all know this is possible!

Roll out air quality monitoring in bigger towns to inform the public of air quality hazards and promote reduction in car use. Targeting the school run might promote more walking and cycling to school.

Green funding - extend to other schools pursuing Green Flags.

Plastic-free initiatives: encouraging shops/restaurants/takeaways to package products and food with paper packaging to reduce microplastic consumption e.g., paper bags at the counters/tills, tetrapak for milk and takeaway boxes.

Promote hedgerows rather than allowing them to be removed during building development – encourage joined-up thinking within Local Authority departments.

Ban use of Glyphosate (or any formula similar to Roundup) on all golf courses and public areas, including playing fields and public areas.

Further reduce mowing on green spaces to support pollinators and develop local composting facilities in suitable locations to compost removed clippings.

Local Authorities should fully adopt All-Ireland Pollinator Plan policies and show leadership on the issues of biodiversity management. Each department in a Local Authority has to be invested, and to use “joined up thinking”.

Remove non-native invasive and harmful plants, animals, bacteria, and viruses (e.g., Giant Hogweed, Japanese Knotweed and Russian Vineweed):

- *Inform the public about the dangers;*
- *Require ALL employees of Local Authorities, especially those in management, to do a course in Non-Native Invasive Species*

Sand Dune protection:

- *Engage with the Coastal Community Network CORI*
- *Local Authorities to employ Nature Based Solutions (embryo dunes, straw bales, chestnut paling, Lyme Grass, Marram grass, etc.) to protected from storms in January, February, and March*
- *Encourage Transition Year students in local schools to assist in planting*
- *Erect signage to keep members of the public off sensitive areas of Sand Dune Systems*
- *Local Authorities to contact ALL sports teams telling coaches to desist from training on ecologically delicate sand dunes, imposing significant fines on offenders*
- *Enact legislation to protect Sand Dunes: responsibility for coastal protection to be given to Local Authorities*

Local Authorities could embrace and promote Nature-Based Solutions to climate change such as living walls and roofs.

Provide more public **litter and recycling bins**.

Water inflows to rivers and estuaries need to be **monitored more closely for nitrates and phosphates**. Any direct inputs from houses or businesses need to be identified and connected the mains.

Rainwater harvesting on homes to remove pulses of runoff from houses and to reduce flooding of drains and streams/rivers.

Citizen Science water quality monitoring and more frequent and extended water quality monitoring to encompass the winter swimming season. The huge disconnect between people and nature can be bridged by Citizen Science initiatives.

Public access to water quality data needs to be improved.

Set up local initiatives to promote a **Circular Economy**.

c. TRAVEL:

i. Initiatives Working Well:

Individuals choosing to use the bike over car, or to walk when possible.

Local Cycling Initiative for active travel wherever possible.

Cycling and walking groups set up by Active Age members.

A '**walking bus**', where parents/guardians escort a group of children to school.

The **cycle & walking pathway** between Baldoyle and Portmarnock.

ii. New Ideas

An **electric loop bus line** connecting all surrounding areas with the town centre (schools, public transport nodes, shops etc.) to replace a lot of car-based journeys of less than 3km.

Connect existing and new cycleways to schools.

Provide **cycle pathways** from apartment developments to Schools.

Provide more **designated cycle and pedestrian paths** - the development of the Fingal coastal path is a matter of urgency.

Encourage people to **include exercise in their daily commute** e.g., walk to the bus, train or school drop off.

Car sharing, which is already done informally, should be encouraged with Apps.

Rail connection to Dublin Airport – connect to Clongriffin Station?

Re-develop the Hill of Howth Tram (vision for Community Wellbeing).

d. SHOPPING, RECYCLING, REUSE:

i. Initiatives Working Well:

Repair Cafés (already run by Sustainable Skerries).

Bring Bank / Recycling collection facilities for glass and clothes (but recycle bins filling far too fast and too often). These need to be monitored and regularly emptied.

Collection boxes in supermarkets for certain materials that are difficult to recycle, e.g., crisp wrappers, batteries, asthma inhalers and water filters.

Green schools initiative.

Green Bins.

Plastic Bag charge.

Refill shops that allow customers to bring jars for refill and provide plastic- and palm oil-free products.

Onsite recycling facilities and loose produce in some supermarkets.

Consumers choosing glass and paper over plastic every time - the power to deliver change through personal choice.

ii. New Ideas

A **green bin collection every week** rather than fortnightly to promote more recycling and prevent overloaded bins littering local areas.

Set up a **cardboard recycling scheme** collected locally from other businesses. Reuse as much as possible and shred the rest to be used as buffer between products.

Encourage / enforce **recycling of plastic bottles and metal cans**, install collection machines that give credit or return deposit.

More refill options and loose produce in supermarkets to reduce the amount of plastic packaging as a matter of urgency.

Make it mandatory for supermarkets to provide an area for **deposit of excessive plastic and cardboard wrapping** from purchased items.

Local Authority to provide large towns with their own recycling facility - make recycling **easier and localised**, cut down on car journeys to facilities.

Standardise jars for locally / regionally produced jams and other products packaged in jars. They could be collected from consumers, washed, and reused. A deposit scheme might be helpful here.

Provide proper bins at entrances to and inside all open areas and parks (waste is often thrown / left there) – and **ensure regular emptying**.

Monthly bulk waste collection by Local Authority from households - members of the public could take unwanted furniture for free before it is collected, which would promote reuse and recycling.

Set up a National awards scheme to encourage towns to promote the elimination of single use plastics.

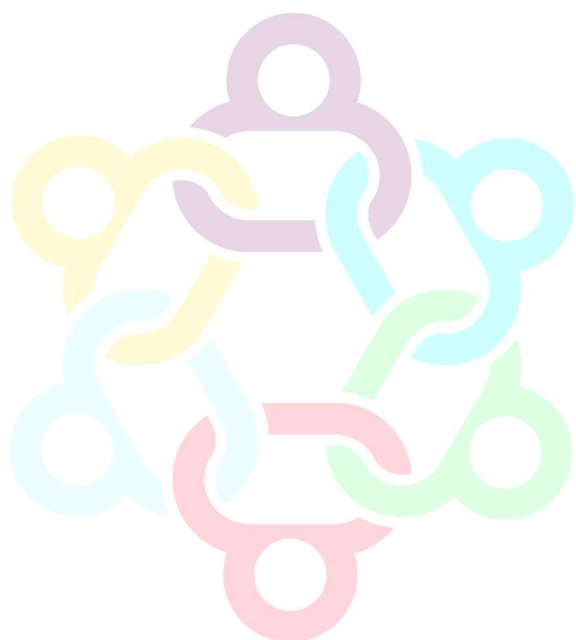
Reduce cardboard and plastic packaging around online shopping items – impose charges on supply companies for disposal.

Ban expanded polystyrene that crumbles in Ireland as it has been in other countries.

Add a levy to disposable cups and single use plastics.

Make it **mandatory for all new buildings to have water butts** installed, for harvesting rainwater for re-use.

Harvest rainfall from agricultural buildings for use in yard cleaning.



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e. ENERGY & BULDINGS:

i. Initiatives Working Well:

Local Sustainable Energy Community (SEC) initiatives, exploring a Sustainable Energy Plan for the area, helping locals to avail of renewable and sustainable energy grants in cooperation with SEAI.

Upgrading buildings: fitting energy-efficient windows, changing lighting to **LEDs** and **moving to modern boilers** that are more efficient.

Upgrading house BERs, making sure that new houses are A1 BER and retrofitting Local Authority housing.

Solar panels being installed in new homes being built to modern energy specifications.

LED public lighting initiatives.

ii. New Ideas.

Local micro-energy generation (wind, solar, biomass).

Consider incorporating **geothermal energy generation** in new housing developments.

Encourage homeowners in housing developments to set up a **joint energy-reducing retrofitting initiative** via S-SECI or directly with the SEAI to improve the cost-benefit situation.

Finance for retrofitting - make it easier and more transparent. Green finance initiatives and grant systems need to be simplified.

Streetlights should be LED and solar powered to save energy.

Promote SECs and link them to a Local Fingal / Eastern area network to work together.

Digest agricultural waste from vegetable growing, slurry and brown waste to produce methane for electricity generation.

Digest/co-digest brown household waste to produce methane for electricity generation.

Create local energy networks of renewable energy support systems.

Create online “one-stop shop” to develop energy generation.

Provide **adequately sized gardens** and **green spaces for biodiversity** in all new housing developments.

New buildings should consider installing **“living walls”** creating eco-friendly buildings and habitats for biodiversity, as well as potentially working as additional thermal insulation.

2. SUPPORTING LOCAL ACTION - CLIMATE ACTION FUND.

Recommendations for the design of the Climate Action Fund:

Reducing energy and car use are the most important local measures for addressing climate change. Funding should be ring-fenced for pedestrian and cycling routes and for improving pedestrian access throughout towns. Many towns include too many impenetrable fences and walls which impede easy movement of non-car users. Local bus routes also need to take better account of peak traffic times and provide realistic timetables.

Collaboration between SEAI, Local Authorities and community groups seems to work well. SEAI and Local Authorities need to have different approaches for different towns to encourage uptake of the Sustainable Energy Community initiatives.

Look into microfinancing as a means of starting the process. Many processes may be essentially self-funding once they are operational, but they need a kickstart.

Amounts raised for Sustainable energy to be deductible from any Death Duties.

Support training of community groups to start community actions by sharing ideas and initiatives that have already worked elsewhere.

Funds could be funnelled to the Tidy Towns groups to promote local level climate action and to deliver nature-based solutions.

3. INFORMING NATIONAL ACTION - CLIMATE ACTION PLAN.

Broader suggestions for the Climate Action Plan:

The feeling is that the public is seeking to get involved in local action on climate change. Deposit return schemes and biodiversity related initiatives have the potential to shift attitudes towards a more sustainable way of living, and to reconnect locals with their natural environment.

Provide self-selecting courses for people who are considering working on climate action projects, e.g., retrofitting. This could be followed by face-to-face experiential tuition if they want to work in the business.

Promote apprenticeships to retrain people who have been or will be made redundant due to the pandemic.

Retrofitting – Local Authorities should have defined targets (e.g., all houses to B2 by 2030) to provide employment return on Government investment.