

# Biodiversity Action Plan for Dunmore

2011- 2014



*This project received grant aid from Galway Rural Development Company Ltd.,  
Rural Development Programme which is financed  
by the Irish Government under the Rural Development  
Programme Ireland 2007-2013 and by the European  
Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe  
investing in Rural Areas.*



Comhshaoil, Pobal agus Rialtas Áitiúil  
Environment, Community and Local Government



people & nature

**Text: Dr Janice Fuller**

**Photos:** Joan Howley, Janice Fuller

### **Acknowledgements**

Thanks to Dunmore Tidy Towns members who organised the venue for the biodiversity training sessions and refreshments for the participants. Thanks also to everyone who came to the biodiversity training sessions and helped with the development of the biodiversity plan (listed in Appendix 1).

Galway County Heritage Forum and Galway County Biodiversity Steering Committee initiated the project, in partnership with Galway Rural Development. Miriam Stewart, Galway Rural Development, Marie Mannion and Elaine O’Riordan helped develop the project, and provided assistance and guidance to the project manager, Janice Fuller, which is gratefully acknowledged.

*Disclaimer: This report contains commercially sensitive and confidential information which should be treated in the strictest confidence. Galway Rural Development cannot accept responsibility for omissions or inaccuracies contained herein.*

## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	4
<b>Dunmore</b> .....	4
<b>Biodiversity Action Plans</b> .....	4
<b>Process to produce the plan</b> .....	5
<b>Nature and Wildlife in Dunmore</b> .....	6
<b>Community Action</b> .....	8
<b>Biodiversity Action Plan for Dunmore</b> .....	10
<b>Objectives of Plan</b> .....	10
<b>Monitoring and Evaluation</b> .....	12
<b>Funding sources</b> .....	12
<b>Useful contacts for more information</b> .....	14
<b>Further reading</b> .....	15
<b>Appendix 1:</b> .....	16

## **Introduction**

### **Dunmore**

Dunmore is a vibrant small town in north Galway, located 15km north-east of Tuam, close to the Galway-Mayo-Roscommon borders. The town lies in an area of gently rolling countryside.



The *Biodiversity Action Plan for Dunmore* sets out a list of projects and activities that will run over the next three years for the benefit of nature and wildlife, environment, and the local community.

### **Biodiversity Action Plans**

Biodiversity Action Plans provide a framework for protecting, managing and/or enhancing natural heritage in area through action led by the local community. The process of producing such a plan creates an opportunity to co-ordinate action among local groups and individuals, and statutory bodies and other organisations.

Many towns, such as Dunmore, have active community-based groups and organisations such as Tidy Towns, schools, environmental organisations, farming groups, scouts, heritage groups etc. that work tirelessly for the benefit of their members and the community. The production of a local biodiversity plan can help ensure that community-based projects will not have a negative impact on biodiversity, and may have positive impacts on nature, the natural environment and natural amenities in an area e.g. through raising awareness, habitat creation and/or appropriate habitat management.

### **Biodiversity**

Biodiversity is another word for natural heritage, nature, wildlife, flora and fauna. Biodiversity includes all living things, the places that plants and animals live (habitats), and the interactions among living things (the web of life).

The natural world (i.e. biodiversity) provides us with many essential ‘goods and services’ – clean air and water, food, fuel, building materials, fertile soils, nutrient recycling systems, pollination of plants including many crops, control of pests and diseases, medicines etc.

Biodiversity has many benefits for local communities by providing natural recreational amenities (e.g. parks and green spaces, walking and biking routes, picnic spots, places for fishing and angling), local educational resources and environmental protection. Allowing room for nature and wildlife in our towns and villages makes them more attractive and interesting, protects our environment, and improves our quality of life.

### **Process to produce the plan**

Biodiversity Training was provided for interested individuals and groups in Dunmore in order to raise awareness of what biodiversity is, why it is important, where it is, and the many benefits of biodiversity for people, communities and the environment.

Residents from Dunmore and the surrounding area met on three occasions with ecologist, Dr Janice Fuller, to develop the biodiversity plan (Appendix 1). Dr Fuller provided the training and facilitated the

production of the local biodiversity action plan. The objectives and actions of the plan were decided by the local community.

Various agencies and environmental organisations were consulted as the plan was developed in order to learn more about biodiversity in the Dunmore area. These included: National Parks and Wildlife Service, the Vincent Wildlife Trust, Bat Conservation Ireland, Galway Bat Group and BirdWatch Galway.

The project to produce a local Biodiversity Action Plan for Dunmore was a collaborative effort between Galway County Council, Galway Rural Development, People and Nature Project, Galway County Heritage Forum, Galway County Biodiversity Steering Group and the local community. The project to produce local Biodiversity Action Plans is an action in the County Galway Biodiversity Action Plan 2008- 2013, which is part of the Galway County Heritage Plan 2009- 2014. It was initiated by the Galway County Heritage Forum and the Galway County Biodiversity Steering Group, in partnership with Galway Rural Development.

### **Nature and Wildlife in Dunmore**

The town of Dunmore has a rich built heritage with the Abbey (founded in 1425) in the centre of town, and Dunmore Castle on the outskirts at Castlefarm. Old stone buildings are often important roosting sites for bats and Daubenton's bat has been recorded in the town environs. This particular type of bat likes to feed along waterways.



*View of river walk along Sinking River, Dunmore*

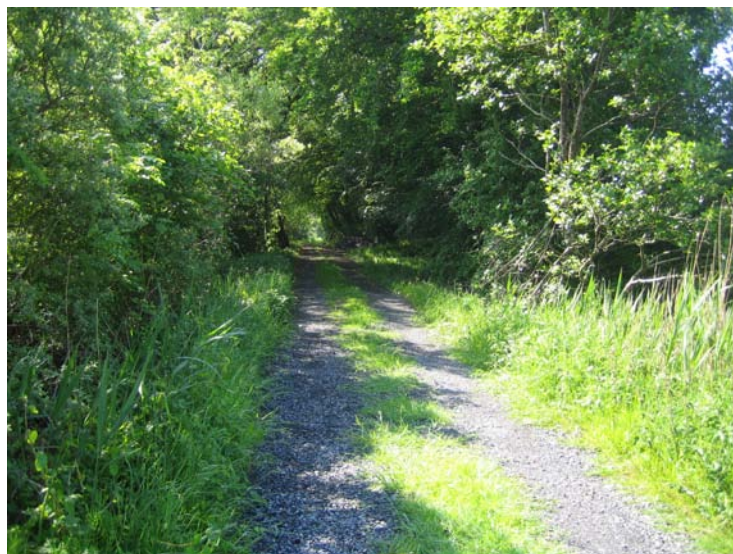


The beautiful Sinking River flows through Dunmore and there is an attractive walkway along the river in the town, which is a popular local amenity. The Sinking River is part of the Corrib system and is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) as part of the Lough Corrib SAC.

The Slieve Bog Natural Heritage Area is a few kilometres east of the town. Bog walks were developed by the Dunmore Tidy Towns group in another area of bogland about half a mile north-west of the town. Three interconnected loop walks were developed and opened in two phases from January 2006 to December 2009. The aim of this project was to provide an accessible and unspoilt nature walk. This popular public natural amenity won Golden Mile awards in 2006 and 2009.



*View from bog walk of swathe of bog cotton, with gorse in foreground*



*Another view of bog walk with mature trees and hedgerow*

Dunmore Demesne Golf Club contains many impressive mature trees including several large chestnut trees. Areas of rough grassland within the Golf Club are great for wildlife. There are also many trees in and around the town, which greatly enhance the town landscape.



*Chestnut trees in Dunmore Demesne Golf Club*

### **Community Action**

**Dunmore Tidy Towns** have been in existence for over thirty years having started as a sub-committee of Dunmore Community Council. As the Tidy Towns Competition has evolved over the years so has the work of this group. Originally the work focused on litter and planting flower boxes etc. Nowadays there is a much greater emphasis on biodiversity and our natural heritage. In recent years Dunmore Tidy Towns have developed a town river walk along the Sinking River. They have also developed a number of interconnecting bog walks which are regularly used by locals for a relaxing walk run or cycle. The entrance to the Bog Walks contains a hand painted information sign by wildlife expert and artist, Gordon D'Arcy, showing some of the wildlife that can be seen along the walk.

**Dunmore Demesne Golf Course & Park** is a nine hole golf course established eleven years ago. It is a parkland course built within the demesne of Dunmore House (now in ruins). While being a golf course it is also a community park with a number of walks available through the course for the enjoyment of the community as a whole.



**Schools** There is a Community School and four National Schools in the parish of Dunmore. Dunmore Community School and Garrafrauns National School are currently working on the biodiversity theme of the Green Schools programme run by An Taisce. Dunmore National School and Ballinlass National School are also participating in the Green Schools programme.

**FÁS** There is a FÁS Community Employment scheme operating in the area and the participants work throughout the community in Dunmore Demesne Golf Club, Archbishop Donnellan Sports Centre, Dunmore Machales GAA pitch, The Fairgreen (Soccer & Rugby pitches), and Dunmore Community Centre.

**Rural Social Scheme (RSS)** Participants in the Rural Social Scheme in Dunmore have carried out a lot of work for Dunmore Tidy Towns, Homes for Dunmore and Dunmore Playground, Dunmore Graveyard.

**Residents Associations** There are currently active residents associations in Barrack Square, Friars Walk, and Abbeylands. Dun Chaoin residents are in the process of setting up an association at present. Barrack Square is a housing development which was built within the walls of an old English Barracks. The high stone walls have been carefully preserved by the developers. A walkway leads from the estate to the River Walk. There is a large green area in front of the houses on which bird tables have been erected. There is an ongoing programme of tree and flower planting by the residents.

Friars Walk is a development which backs onto the River. This estate was unfinished by the original developers. The residents association have worked tirelessly over the last number of years to sort out the problems. They have recently landscaped the land running down to the river.

Abbeylands is the oldest estate in the town having been built by the Rural Housing Organisation (R.H.O.) in the eighties. It is very well maintained by the residents association.

## Biodiversity Action Plan for Dunmore

### Objectives of Plan

1. To raise awareness, appreciation and understanding of biodiversity in Dunmore
2. To protect and enhance natural amenities in Dunmore

	<b>Action/ Project</b>	<b>Lead Partner</b>	<b>Other partners</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
1	Prepare habitat map for Dunmore parish	Tidy Towns	GCC (Elaine O’Riordan), Schools	2012
2	Conduct feasibility study to extend River Walk	Tidy Towns	Landowners, IFA, GRD, GCC	2012
3	Conduct survey of birds in bird sanctuary (golf course)	Tidy Towns	Galway BirdWatch, Dunmore Gun Club, GCC	2013
4	Establish wildflower gardens in town <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tuam Road</li> <li>- End of river bank</li> </ul>	Tidy Towns	GCC, RSS	2012- 2013
5	Plant native trees along river walk, in town and along approach roads	Tidy Towns, Dunmore NS	RSS, GCC	Annual (Tree Week)
6	Run Annual Spring Clean	Tidy Towns	Schools, GCC, An Taisce	Annual
7	Run nature and environment walks and talks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- River management</li> <li>- Beekeeping for beginners</li> <li>- Gardening with nature</li> <li>- Dealing with invasives</li> </ul>	Tidy Towns	IFI, GCC, Peter Nolan	Annual
8	Develop Dunmore Wildlife and Nature Information Board	Tidy Towns	GCC	2014

9	Develop Biodiversity Page on Dunmore website	Tidy Towns	Schools, GCC	2012
10	Run biodiversity projects in Dunmore NS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Plant native hedgerow</li> <li>- Create wildflower meadow</li> <li>- Create wildlife pond</li> <li>- Run tree planting and tree ID project</li> </ul>	Dunmore NS	Tidy Towns, GCC	On-going
11	Take measures to enhance nature and wildlife along River Walk	Tidy Towns, schools	RSS, GCC	On-going
12	My environment project (sense of responsibility)	Schools	Dunmore Tidy Towns, GCC	2013
13	Run nature walk during Dunmore festival	Dunmore Festival Committee	GCC	Annual
14	Erect and maintain bird boxes and feeders in town	RSS/ Dunmore Community School	Tidy Towns, GCC	Annual
15	Plant native trees in Dunmore Demesne Golf Club and maintain meadow areas	FÁS, DDGC		Annual
16	Update map of trees in Golf Club	Community School/ DDGC/ FÁS	Tidy Towns, GCC	2013
17	Conduct survey of Sinking River (fish, wildlife and aquatic habitats)	Dunmore Tidy Towns	GCC, GMIT, IFI, NUIG	2013
18	Support Dunmore Community School biodiversity projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prepare habitat map in 2012 and on completion of plan in 2014</li> <li>- Build bug hotel in school grounds</li> </ul>	Dunmore Community School	Dunmore Tidy Towns, GCC	2012- 2014

*DDGC = Dunmore Demesne Golf Club, GCC = Galway County Council*

*RSS = Rural Social Scheme,*

*GMIT = Galway Mayo Institute of Technology*

*IFI = Inland Fisheries Ireland*

*NUIG = National University of Ireland, Galway*

## Monitoring and Evaluation

A committee will be established to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the ‘*Biodiversity Action Plan for Dunmore*’. They will meet at least twice a year in order to set annual goals and to review progress to date. The committee will liaise with the Galway County Heritage Officer and the Galway County Biodiversity Project Manager.

## Funding sources

Potential sources of funding that could assist with implementing actions in the plan include the following:

Fund/ Funding Body	Description
Galway Rural Development	This leader company offers full and part funding for a variety of community-led projects. Discuss potential projects with the Community Development Workers prior to submitting applications to determine if they meet the GRD criteria for projects.  ( <a href="http://www.grd.ie">www.grd.ie</a> )
The Heritage Council	The Heritage Council offer grants to community groups and individuals for heritage projects every year. The deadline for applications is usually in November but this can change. See their website for details of the grant application criteria and application process  ( <a href="http://www.heritagecouncil.ie">www.heritagecouncil.ie</a> )
Local Agenda 21 Environmental Partnership Fund, Galway County Council	This fund is administered by the Environment Section of Galway County Council; it promotes sustainable development by assisting small scale, non-profit environmental projects at a local level.  ( <a href="http://www.galway.ie/en/Services/Environment/CommunityInitiatives/LocalAgenda21/">www.galway.ie/en/Services/Environment/CommunityInitiatives/LocalAgenda21/</a> )

<p>Heritage Grant Scheme, Galway County Council</p>	<p>The objective of this Heritage Grant Scheme is to promote interest, education, knowledge and pride in, and to facilitate appreciate and enjoyment of the heritage of County Galway. Applications are invited once a year, usually in the Spring.  (<a href="http://www.galway.ie/en/Services/Heritage/HeritageGrants/">www.galway.ie/en/Services/Heritage/HeritageGrants/</a>)</p>
<p>County Galway Biodiversity Project</p>	<p>The County Galway Biodiversity Project Manager, Elaine O’Riordan, applies for funding to wide range of funding bodies and organisations; community groups access this funding for biodiversity-related projects by contacting her directly. She will also assist groups with funding applications.  (E-mail <a href="mailto:elaine.oriordan@nuigalway.ie">elaine.oriordan@nuigalway.ie</a>)</p>



## Useful contacts for more information

Name (Group/ Individual)	Activities/ Expertise	Contact details
Marie Mannion, Heritage Officer, Galway County Council	All matters relating to heritage including biodiversity and funding.	mmannion@galwaycoco.ie www.galwaycountyheritage.com (091) 509198
Elaine O’Riordan, Galway County Biodiversity Project Manager	Biodiversity, natural heritage, habitat mapping, community-based projects	elaine.oriordan@nuigalway.ie www.galwaycountybiodiversity.com (091) 495921
Inland Fisheries Ireland	Responsible for the protection, conservation and management of the inland fisheries resource	Contact: Kevin Rogers, Senior Environmental Officer (091) 563118
Galway Bat Group	Organise walks and talks on bats in Galway	galwaybatgroup@gmail.com
Vincent Wildlife Trust	Promote conservation of bats and other wildlife; provide information and advice; organise walks and talks on bats	katemcaney@vwt.org.uk
BirdWatch Galway	Promote conservation of birds and their habitats; conduct surveys and organise birdwatching events	www.galwaybirdwatch.org
Irish Seed Savers Association	Promote conservation of genetic crop resources; provide advice and information about native varieties of fruit and other crops; sell fruit trees	www.irishseedsavers.ie
Galway Rural Development	Support and work with community groups to develop new initiatives in their area;	www.grd.ie 091 844885

	provide funding for community-based projects	
The Heritage Council	Promote conservation and management of Irelands' heritage; provide information and advice to community groups; also provide funding for heritage projects	<a href="http://www.heritagecouncil.ie">www.heritagecouncil.ie</a>
National Parks and Wildlife Service	Responsible for the protection of Ireland's natural heritage, particularly sites designated as Special Conservation Areas, Special Protection Areas, Natural Heritage Areas, and Nature Reserves etc., and species of conservation concern e.g. hen harriers.	Conservation Ranger John Higgins (093)47502

### Further reading

- Galway County Biodiversity Action Plan 2008- 2013
- Galway County Heritage Plan 2009- 2014
- Biodiversity Guidelines for Communities (Galway County Council)

(all available from the Heritage Officer; [www.galway.ie](http://www.galway.ie)).

## Appendix 1:

List of participants in biodiversity training to develop biodiversity plan

	Name
1	Joan Howley
2	John Niland
3	Gertie Timothy
4	David Cronin
5	Gerry Hussey
6	James Donnellan
7	Mary Murphy
8	John McCormack
9	Peter Nolan
10	Martin Burke
11	Martin Silke
12	Madeline Mitchell
13	Padraig Cosgrove
14	Sabrina Walsh
15	Martin Walsh
16	Bernie Connolly
17	Hubert Bermingham
18	Anne Reddington
19	Larry Maguire
20	David Mc Donagh
21	Pat Fahy
22	Sinead Canny
23	Jaqueline Colleran
24	Sr. Bernadine Morrisson
25	Frank Ward
26	Carmel Howley
27	Janette Slattery
28	George Breun