

Nature and Wildlife Plan for Monivea

2011- 2014



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Comhshaoil, Pobal agus Rialtas Áitiúil
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Introduction

Monivea

Monivea is a beautiful small village in east Galway, located 29km north-east of Galway City and 10km north of Athenry.

The *Nature and Wildlife Plan for Monivea* sets out a list of projects and activities that will run over the next three years in the Monivea area for the benefit of nature and wildlife, environment, and the local community. This document is a 'Biodiversity Action Plan' for Monivea.



Biodiversity Action Plans

Biodiversity Action Plans provide a framework for protecting, managing and/or enhancing natural heritage in the 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, individuals, statutory bodies, and other organisations.

Many towns and villages, like Monivea, have active community-based groups such as Tidy Towns, schools, farming organisations, anglers, scouts etc. that work tirelessly for the benefit of their members

and the community. The production of a local biodiversity action 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 amenities in the 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 Monivea 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 Monivea 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 Monivea area. These include: 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 Monivea 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 Monivea

Monivea has attractive tree-lined greens on either side of the main street through the village. The trees link the village with the beautiful Monivea Woods, which is a wonderful amenity for residents and visitors close to the heart of the village. Monivea Wood, managed by Coillte, is a highly valued recreation amenity with a network of walking trails including two way-marked trails, the historical trail and mass track trail. A map of the woods and trails can be found on www.coillteoutdoors.ie. Monivea Woods was part of the former Ffrench Estate. The Ffrench family Mausoleum still lies within the woods and can be visited by the public. Monivea Castle stands on the edge of the woodland.



Ffrench family Mausoleum in Monivea Wood

There are several raised bogs in the area around Monivea. Monivea Bog is located just south of the village. This site has been designated as a Special Area of Conservation because raised bogs are a rare habitat internationally, and because of the high quality of bogland habitats present. Tiaquin Bog to the east is designated as a Natural Heritage Area. There are other special bogs in the environs that form part of the Corrib system catchment, and together with Killaclogher River, are designated as part of the Lough Corrib Special Area of Conservation.



Monivea Wood

Monivea village and environs has a particularly rich mix of wildlife habitats with woodland, bog, farmland, hedgerows, stone walls and the river. Two species of bats, soprano pipistrelle and Natter's bat have been recorded in the area but further studies would undoubtedly reveal more.



Bug hotel in Monivea, erected by Monivea Tidy Towns

Community Action

Ryehill Community Council / Community Employment Project – The Ryehill Community Council Community Employment Project, which is funded by FÁS, has restored the Ryehill Demesne wall and rebuilt the boundary wall at Ryehill Church and continues the maintenance of the Church grounds. The project maintains the village greens, shrub beds, flower beds, approach roads, playground area, as well as assisting the local Tidy Towns Committee. The project looks after the woodland walks, the Mausoleum and Ice House. Informative notice boards have been erected throughout the woodlands and village area providing locals and visitors with information on the flora and fauna as well as a map of the wooded area. The CE project liaises with the local National School in Monivea and have held a bat walk and nature walks with Gordon D'Arcy from Birdwatch, Ireland. These events proved to be very informative and popular.

Monivea Tidy Towns - The committee is made up of voluntary members of our community, including a representative from our local Community Employment Project. Monivea Tidy Towns have been in

existence since the mid 1970's, although they did not start entering the competition until the early 1990's.

In the meantime work was continuously progressing, preparing the village and the surrounding areas, with the assistance of our local Community Employment Scheme. Some of the projects undertaken were, stone walls on all the approach roads into the village were rebuilt, shrub beds, trees and flowers were planted, footpaths were replaced and a book on Monivea, (Monivea and its People – The Story So Far) was researched and written by participants on a the Community Employment Project 1994/1995. In 1997, a “Visual Study of Monivea”, was carried out by architect Stephen Newell (Board Fáilte), where he recommended a number of tasks to be carried out, in order to improve the environment. One of those recommendations was to create an “avenue” effect, by planting trees in line, each side of the main street. These trees link the village with the Monivea Woods, which is a wonderful recreation amenity.

In 2008, an “Action Plan for Monivea”, was compiled by Donaldson Tourism & Heritage Consultancy. The Report first considered the performance of Monivea in the Tidy Towns Competition in the period 2004 to 2007, when the total marks increased from 240 to 270. As a result of this report, 5 main performance weakness categories were identified namely, Wildlife & Natural Amenities, Litter Control, Waste Minimisation, Tidiness and Residential Areas. These areas were highlighted as being the best potential areas for gaining marks, in the Tidy Towns Competition and these issues are being addressed on an on-going basis. As a result of the on-going work and maintenance, we were awarded 290 marks for 2011, placing us 3rd, in our category.

Our experience of taking part in the Tidy Towns Competition has created a greater awareness of the importance of improving the local environment and it brings the community together. We find that the competition creates community spirit, giving job satisfaction when work is completed and it also gives a sense of pride in the community. Each year people become actively involved, sharing their own ideas, with a common objective of working to sustain and improve our area.

Monivea Community Council Ltd - Monivea Community Council Ltd is made up of elected and nominated members of the geographical area of Monivea. Its aim is to involve all the members of the community in identifying local problems and needs, and taking action to resolve them. Monivea Community Council Ltd has several projects in progress. There are several projects which it is hoped

will become part of a village plan including the redevelopment of the Church of Ireland grounds; walks in Monivea Woods and on surrounding roads; footpath development on the approach road from Galway into the village and from the village to Ryehill Church.

Fr. Sammon Hall Management - Fr. Sammon Hall Management look after the management and development of the hall. The hall is used regularly by the community for a wide range of activities.

Ryehill Church Pastoral Council - Ryehill Church Pastoral Council is made up of members of the community who meet regularly to look after the running and development of the Church and the grounds surrounding the Church.

Monivea National School – Monivea National School is participating in the Greenschools programme run by An Taisce and are currently working on the Biodiversity Theme. The school has compost bins, and an organic fruit and vegetable garden. The children and parents participate in the Annual Spring Clean and monthly clean up, and recycling initiatives.

Nature and Wildlife Plan for Monivea

Objectives of the Plan

1. Raise awareness of the importance of nature, wildlife, and biodiversity in Monivea
2. Protect and enhance natural amenities in Monivea

	Action/ Project	Lead Partner	Other partners	Timeframe
1	Monivea Spring Clean	Monivea TT	School, GCC, Community Groups	Annual
2	Organise bat walks and talks	Monivea TT	Vincent Wildlife Trust	Annual
3	Monivea National School biodiversity projects (described in appendix)	Monivea NS	Parents, TT, GCC, An Taisce	On-going
4	Erect & maintain wildlife information boards. E.g. trees, bats, wildflowers of Monivea. Put information on website. <i>http://monivea.galway-ireland.ie/</i>	Monivea TT	Coillte, GCC	2012
5	Erect and maintain variety of bird and bat boxes; monitor usage	Monivea TT	FÁS/ RSS, School	2012
6	Create butterfly garden	Monivea TT	FÁS/ RSS, School	2012

7	Use natural fertiliser where possible in public plantings (available from school)	Monivea TT	FÁS/ RSS, School	On-going
8	Put water butts in school and village for use in watering planters	Monivea TT	FÁS/ RSS, School	2012
9	Run woodland nature walks	Monivea TT	Coillte	Annual
10	Develop tree management and planting plan for village	Community Council, Monivea TT	All community groups	2013
11	Develop water feature in village (site of old flax retting pond)	Monivea TT	Community Development Association	2013
12	Maintain and monitor bug hotel in village	Monivea TT	FÁS/ School	On-going
13	Develop wildlife and nature map for village and environs (following wildlife audit)	Monivea TT	GCC, NUIG	2013
14	Raise awareness of the biodiversity plan with the local community	Monivea TT	School	2011

Monitoring and Evaluation

A committee will be established to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the plan '*Nature and Wildlife Plan for Monivea*'. 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.
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 (www.heritagecouncil.ie)
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. (www.galway.ie/en/Services/Environment/CommunityInitiatives/LocalAgenda21/)

Heritage Grant Scheme, Galway County Council	<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.</p> <p>(www.galway.ie/en/Services/Heritage/HeritageGrants/)</p>
County Galway Biodiversity Project	<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.</p> <p>(E-mail elaine.oriordan@nuigalway.ie)</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 (091) 509198 www.galwaycountyheritage.com
Elaine O’Riordan, Galway County Biodiversity Project Manager	Biodiversity, natural heritage, habitat mapping, community-based projects	elaine.oriordan@nuigalway.ie (091) 495921 www.galwaycountybiodiversity.com
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
Coillte	Manage Monivea Woods and recreation area	Michael.donnellan@coillte.ie www.coillteoutdoors.ie

Galway Rural Development	Support and work with community groups to develop new initiatives in their area; provide funding for community-based projects	www.grd.ie 091 844885
The Heritage Council	Promote conservation and management of Ireland's heritage; provide information and advice to community groups; also provide funding for heritage projects	www.heritagecouncil.ie
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 Rebecca Teesdale (091) 870340 www.npws.ie
Shane O hEithir, Community, Enterprise and Economic Development Unit, Galway County Council	Provides groups with support for Tidy Towns including advice on a wide range of topics and issues	soheithir@galwaycoco.ie (091) 476502 www.galway.ie/

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).

Appendix 1:

List of participants in biodiversity training to develop biodiversity plan

	Name
1	Gerard Costello
2	Eileen McKeogh
3	Julie McGrath
4	Sheila Kane
5	Sean Broderick
6	Mary Walsh
7	Maureen Treacy
8	Nuala Lane