

GREEN SHOOTS

maynooth green campus

NEWSLETTER




Issue 2 November 2020

Welcome to the Maynooth Green Campus Newsletter!


Welcome to the second issue of Green Shoots. It continues to be a very challenging year and we are so sorry that students have not yet had a true and full campus experience. However, like everybody else, we have been doing whatever we can online and we hope that this second edition helps to keep you connected with us and the things we hold dear. We have some great news about achievements, particularly that Maynooth campus has been recognised as the overall winner of the All Ireland Pollinator Award in 2020. There are also some reports on webinars and other events, and an exciting competition for students called Young Reporters for the Environment.

Maynooth Green Campus Team



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Photo by Maura Boyle

News, Updates & Events



Dr Joe Larragy

MGC Chair

Applied Social Studies Dept.

All Ireland Pollinator Award: Another first for Maynooth campus

Maynooth campus has been named as *overall winner of the [Pollinator Project Awards](#)*, following a rigorous identification process by the National Biodiversity Data Centre. This Award is run jointly by An Taisce Environmental Education and the [All-Ireland Pollinator Plan](#). There are pollinator project awards in four different categories. Maynooth Campus was winner in both the “town park” category and overall winner across all categories. The judges noted that Maynooth campus “*not only undertakes pollinator-friendly planting and gardening, but also makes a great effort to educate the campus community and the public and promotes these efforts through its website and social media*”.

The award is specifically for those Green Flag Parks or Gardens that have worked to support the local pollinating insect populations or promote their importance.

This is a truly impressive achievement and is a credit to Stephen Seaman, the grounds supervisor, and his remarkable team. The Maynooth Green Campus Biodiversity Working Group, led by Dr Jim Carolan, and Dr Gail Maher, also deserve credit for their work in making the campus a site for research and on-site learning and an example of how to promote biodiversity awareness in the community.

In addition to the pollinator award, Maynooth campus, which was the first university campus to win a *Green Flag for Parks and Gardens* in 2019, has maintained its flag in 2020, for “exceeding tough environmental standards in green space management, and excellence of visitor attractions. The Green Flag Award for Parks is the mark of a quality park or green space and is recognised throughout the world.”

All-Ireland Pollinator Plan



Since 2016, the campus has been an active partner in the [All-Ireland Pollinator Plan](#), which goes from strength to strength. The importance of this initiative for biodiversity is underlined by the recent report from the [World Wildlife fund](#), which stated that some 68% of wildlife species have been lost between 1970 and 2016, underlines the global

importance and urgency of work to promote biodiversity.

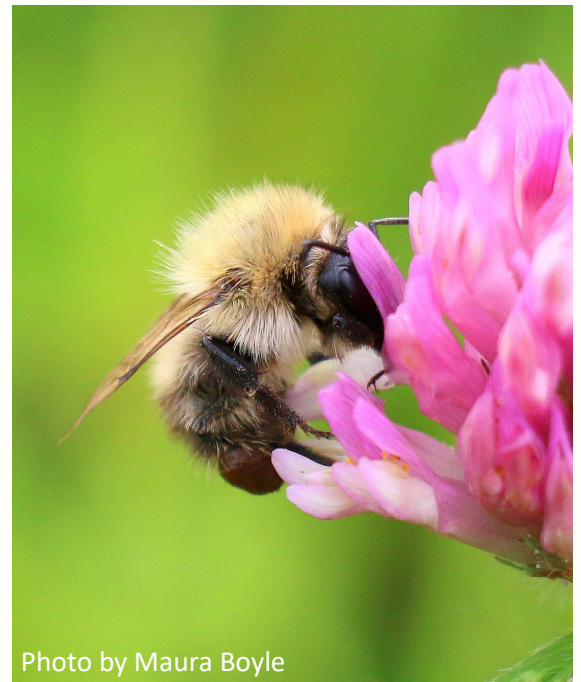


Photo by Maura Boyle

Common carder bumblebee (Bombus pascuorum) foraging on red clover in MU wildflower meadow.

Green Campus Flag

These awards are separate from the Green Campus Flag accreditation for third level colleges by An Taisce, which has been received by 13 colleges nationally. Maynooth campus was awarded the Green Campus Flag in 2018 following rigorous assessment by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) for its work on the themes of Energy, Waste, Water, Travel & transport, Biodiversity and for its pioneering work on Climate justice.



Stephen Seaman, Maynooth University Grounds Supervisor, with the Green Flag Award for Pollinators. 2020. Maynooth University also received the Green Campus

Get involved in Green Campus



Dara Dever

Green Campus Programme

An Taisce



As you progress to third level why not continue a familiar environmental stewardship journey. You may have come from a school which took part in the Green-Schools programme, under the guidance of the Foundation for Environmental Education. The Green-Campus programme is the third-level evolution of Green-Schools. It is an internationally recognised award which empowers students to lead for sustainability and extend learning beyond lectures to develop responsible attitudes towards the environment, society, and wider community. Over the past year climate change has come to the fore of public discussion, not least in the climate strikes.



Photo by Sarah Larragy

Photo taken at climate strike protest in Maynooth Village Spring 2019

Now is a good time to ask yourself how you can use your voice and act. Maynooth Green-Campus is a well-established Green-Campus committee, and you could become a member of the committee and/or participate in some of their initiatives. As you start



Photo by Maura Boyle

Seven-spot or common ladybird carrying pollen. These beetles can help pollinate plants as well as keep a check on aphid populations.

your journey in Maynooth you offer a fresh perspective that can help the MGC programme to continue to evolve and expand during your time in Maynooth.



Photo by Sarah Larragy

Wildflower walk led by Dr Gail Maher, member of MU Green Campus, Biodiversity Working Group.

The Green-Campus programme includes thirty-seven registered Campuses, of which thirteen have been awarded the prestigious Green Flag. The Green-Campus Programme encourages practical environmental education and the empowerment of campuses to become exemplars in environmental stewardship. Stakeholder driven, bottom up approaches to environmental management as facilitated by Green-Campus has delivered benefits to the environment, campus management, students, and learning, and to local and wider communities.



Small tortoiseshell butterfly on *Verbena bonvariensis* by bug hotel at library. When planting new beds, pollinator friendly plants are preferentially chosen by Maynooth University Grounds Staff.

To get involved in Maynooth Green campus email us at greencampus@mu.ie or find us on social media! See the back page of *Green Shoots* for individual working group contacts.

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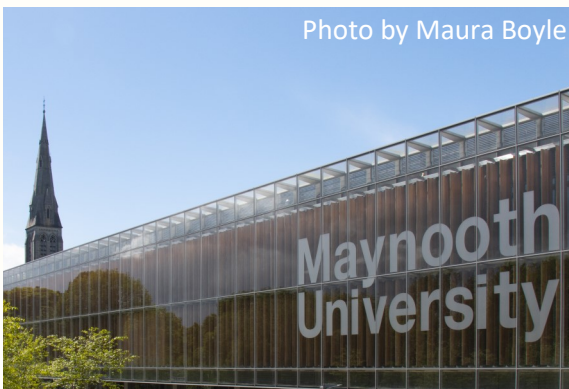
Campus Energy Update



Ciaran Coffey

We are currently replacing the inefficient external lighting system on the North Campus, with an energy efficient and environmentally friendlier system, using LED lamps. We will install around 800 light fittings saving 217,000 kilowatt hours of electrical energy. The new light fittings have a colour temperature of 3000 kelvin, making them both environmentally friendly and cost effective. Staying at 3000 kelvin or less provides enough light but also avoids having a harsh glare and is friendlier to human health (e.g., sleep) and to nocturnal wildlife and their habitats. It also reduces skyglow and improves nightscapes. Click [HERE](#) for further environmental information on lighting.

We also go the go-ahead to replace the roof on the old section of the John Paul II Library. The project will be undertaken during Summer 2021. The installation will include a new insulated roof, building fabric upgrade, new boilers, new air handling equipment and a array of 40 Photo Voltaic Solar panels.



Permission was received to replace the roof of John Paul II Library which will take place in the summer months of 2021.

The Edible Garden Project



Dr Patricia Kettle

Dr Patricia Kettle, Sociology, has joined the Green Campus Team and is leading a new working group on Sustainable Food and Agriculture. Working on the principle that "well-functioning public spaces rely on involving people in the creation of that space" (Kettle, 2015) the group aims to promote sustainable relationships with food and land, through collaborative practice of cultivation skills and projects on campus. Also, the group will promote knowledge of ecologically sustainable methods of food production and biodiversity.

The group activities are intended to reconnect the campus community with nature and land via campus-based activities. More widely, it will promote thinking about well-functioning 'public' spaces,

'productive landscapes' and engagement with nature to improve health and well-being (re-grounding) and through co-operative thin king, shed a critical light on unsustainable capitalist agricultural practices. Patricia, who will be linking with the grounds staff, would welcome ideas and collaboration with colleagues with a view to developing links to learning and research.

To register your interest, please contact patria.healykettle@mu.ie



Strawberry plants require pollination to form their fruits.

Healthy People on a Healthy Planet: Online conference 24th/25th September 2020



Lorna Gold

Adjunct lecturer,
Dept. of Applied
Social Studies

The Irish Global Health Network (IGHN), in collaboration with Queens University Belfast and other partners, hosted a two-day online conference on "Healthy People on a Healthy Planet" on 24/25 September, the fifth anniversary of the ratification of the Global goals for sustainable development. The conference had a great line up of speakers from Ireland and abroad and interactive panels. Our colleague Lorna Gold was the modera-



Find recordings of the event: <https://globalhealth.ie/qub/>

UN online education programme on Circular Economy



Lorna Gold

Adjunct lecturer,
Dept. of Applied
Social Studies

This autumn the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has launched an online education programme designed to increase awareness of the circular economy and to kick start green entrepreneurship across the world. This new Massive Open Online Programme has involved collaboration between a range of institutions and authors. This free course, as well as many other excellent learning opportunities on the Sustainable Development Goals, is now open for enrolment on the UNDP Learning for Nature platform. Our colleague Lorna Gold contributed to this course.



other interested stakeholders participated. There was a very useful exchange of ideas on open spaces strategy for the future. There is an existing open spaces strategy from 2011. Anyone with an interest in this consultation process can make a submission, however short, via this link:

<https://consult.kildarecoco.ie/en/consultation/open-space-and-outdoor-recreation-strategy>



Comhairle Contae Chill Dara
Kildare County Council

Maynooth campus input to new Open spaces strategy for Kildare

8 October: Two reps from Maynooth (Eliz Dunne, Joe Larragy) attended an online Workshop hosted by Kildare County Council on open spaces strategy for Kildare County from 2021-2031, hosted by the planning Department Kildare County Council. This strategy follows up on the 2011 strategy. Several



Photo by Maura Boyle

Common spotted orchid in wildflower meadow, Maynooth University (North Campus).

Car Sharing 2014—2020

Here are some figures for car-sharing from 2013/4 to 2019-20. Note, year 2019-20 is based on 18 weeks only (normally 23 weeks). The good news is that the weekly average car-sharing number increased from 18 to 49 over the years and there is a corresponding increase in the usage of the available spaces. The scheme is not operating this year due to the need for physical distancing. On the other hand, the car parks are not full, so carbon footprints are down for the present. The Covid cloud has at least this silver lining!

	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15	2013-14
Spaces used	881	965	744	821	888	661	423
Duration (Weeks)	18	23	22	23	23	23	23
Weekly avg.	48.94	41.95	33.81	35.69	38.60	28.73	18.39
% usage	69.92%	59.93%	48.31%	50.99%	55.15%	41.05%	26.27%

Links to learning

MaynoothSparks 2020:

The heat is on as Post-Docs present research on climate

The *MaynoothSparks 2020* Post-Doc research presentation event on 22 October 2020 focused on climate change research taking place at Maynooth, at ICARUS. It was a superb event, hosted by Patrick Boyle of the research office, giving a good sense of advanced research work being done at Maynooth. Presenters were restricted to six minutes (so the heat was on in more senses than one)! They did pack quite a lot in, starting with Andre Duesterhus on moving from climate predictions to climate services, and Saeed Golian on the North Atlantic surface pressure changes and related rainfall prediction. Below the surface, Levke Caesar was taking the fingerprint of the gulf stream to probe the effects a slowdown might have on climate. Turning to mitigation, and still at sea, Bingyong Guo examined the prospects for energy from wave power to replace fossil fuel. Meanwhile, back on land, Aj Sathiyam Nair was relating soil moisture variation to climate change, and Sam Grainger – on even drier land – focused on drought - Ireland’s “forgotten climate hazard”, and the challenges posed for climate stakeholders. Finally, for those of us who cannot yet see the wood for the trees, Catriona Duffy



Dr Iain Macdonald

Head of Dept.
Design Innovation



rounded of a great webinar with a focus on forestry and vegetation pattern changes arising from Climate change.

MSc Design & Innovation students create the Buzz Factor

In September 2020, Dr Iain Macdonald invited Maynooth Green Campus to give a briefing to incoming MSc cohort, and the students used this briefing and the first issue of *Green Shoots* to prepare a communications strategy related to various aspects of our work. The results, which contained some excellent ideas, were later presented in class, and we were invited to see the students make their pitch. We look forward to continued collaboration with this group and welcome such initiatives from colleagues and students to bring the sustainability, climate action and just transition themes into their teaching and learning programmes.

Ian adds: "Working remotely in small groups our students quickly grasped the potential for engaging graphic communication to promote our Green Campus using a variety of channels, from the electric vans to organic murals. The project not only made our students more aware of MGC initiatives but tapped into personal passions for our environment. Educational pollinators: we can bring a buzz to the place!"

Some ideas that MSc Design and Innovation students came up with to promote the work of Maynooth Green Campus. Well done to all those involved!



Young Reporters for the Environment (YRE) Competition 2020 – 2021

Maynooth Green Campus has been asked by An Taisce and the Copenhagen-based Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE), to take part in a pilot initiative in five third level colleges called Young Reporters for the Environment (YRE).

The competition will be open to students aged between 17 and 25 years. YRE supports groups and individual students to investigate local environmental issues and report their findings through a written article, video clip or photo report.

The overarching theme is Climate Action, which crosses all the themes on which Maynooth Green Campus works, including biodiversity, energy, water, waste, travel & transport, and climate justice.

There are four stages to the process: investigate, research solutions, report, and disseminate in your community. Resources for YRE Ireland are [here](#).

Reports from participating students will be shortlisted for a national competition to take place in May 2021. There is an overall prize fund of €1,500 for National winners across the third level colleges category. The best national reports over the course of the academic year

will represent Ireland on the international stage and the best ones will be published on the Young Reporters for the Environment Exposure site and shared on social media.

HOW TO ENTER

Send your entry directly to yre@eeu.antaisce.org and CC green-campus@mu.ie. We will be organising some additional campus level prizes for Maynooth or SPCM students.

Entries will be accepted at any stage between now and the deadline Wed. 14th April 2021.
Judging takes place in May.

See www.yreireland.org/Terms-and-Conditions.php for all entry criteria.

Be sure to check out the following for more information and online support:

- [YRE Tools and Resources](#)
- [YRE Ireland Resources](#)
- [Instagram @YREIreland](#)
- [Facebook @YREIRL](#)



**Young Reporters
for the environment**



Photo by Maura Boyle

Climate Change: Paris 5 years on



Prof John Sweeney

For those of us fortunate to be in Paris in December 2015, there was a sense of history in the making. After two weeks making the journey out to the massive conference centre that was hosting COP21 on the outskirts of the city, the euphoria was palpable. There was a sense that at last countries were here to do business. After 21 years of trying, a global deal on tackling climate change was finally being struck. On the rostrum the hosts and officials hugged each other, as on the floor or the hall political leaders from across the world did likewise. Long standing negotiators such as UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon, Secretary of State John Kerry from the US, veteran negotiator Xie Zhenhua from China, President Hollande from France and a host of others from 192 countries were caught up in a tidal wave of emotion. The small NGO delegation from Ireland were no different and at last we thought a sustainable future was within sight.

The choreography leading up to the Paris conference was crucial. Six years earlier in Copenhagen hopes of a global deal had been dashed. This time it had to be different. In advance of the Conference, an agreement on emission reductions was reached between Presidents Obama and Xi, representing the world's two largest greenhouse gas emitting countries. The French diplomatic system worked tirelessly across the globe, including here in Ireland, to coax and cajole. Pope Francis issued his famous *Laudato Si'* Encyclical in June 2015 which was a landmark document for Catholics around the world. Promises of financial help for developing countries to assist their transition to a sustainable future also emerged from several rich countries. It seemed in December 2015 the world had woken up at last.

But as the years rolled on, it became clear that good intentions were not being translated into actions. The pledges made for reduction in emissions were being interpreted to suit national interests, not global. Five years on, the pledges rule book has still not been finalised and a wave of populist leaders have abrogated their responsibilities or even announced their withdrawal from the international treaty they signed up to.

The lost 5 years will now stretch further due to Covid-19 and postponement of COP25 due to be held in December. Meanwhile climate change continues. The average annual temperature for the European land area for the last decade was over 1.6°C above the pre-industrial level, which makes it the warmest decade on record.

Paris obliged countries to make every effort to keep global warming below 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. In the climate science community, researchers

are now looking at what they refer to as 'overshoot' and the prognosis is not good!

Ireland also failed miserably in meeting its obligations. Instead of reducing our emissions by 20% on 2005 levels we will probably be close to parity with them, though Covid will provide a temporary reduction. Not the way to manage your international obligations though!

China's recent announcement of its intention to reach carbon neutrality by 2060 is to be welcomed. It didn't get much coverage in our media of course. But for all its faults, China delivers on its commitments, often well in advance. Of course, it is a lot easier in a totalitarian political system that can govern by decree. It is though ironic that western democracies, outside the EU, have relinquished leadership of this issue. Perhaps the antics of some world leaders have not completely demolished multilateralism after all and perhaps the actions of China will send a message that whatever the negative climate actions countries such as US, Australia and Brazil undertake, there is still some hope of concerted global action. The election of Biden in the USA marks a potential turn for the better.

There's a convoluted phrase which underpins the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. It is "Common but Differentiated Responsibilities". It essentially says all states should take responsibility for global environmental problems but, we also need to recognise the wide differences in levels of economic development between states. Pointing the finger at big developing countries is no excuse for inaction by those richer countries (and people) that can make a difference. As a relatively rich country, Ireland should be shouldering a greater burden than most others. However, there is at last hope that the seriousness of the situation has permeated the consciousness of political leaders and hope that things like the EU Green Deal will provide impetus for the radical social changes necessary.

The lockdowns and the time to think why pandemics happen have produced a rethink in many of what we should do about our future sustainability. For this we have to thank young people who, despite the ongoing opposition from powerful vested interest groups, got the message through via school strikes and demonstrations in a way that scientists had failed to do. This is why environmental and social education in schools and university is so important and why initiatives like Green Campus can nourish and foster the seed capital that is our young people so that Paris 2, whenever it happens, is not controlled by narrow minded perspectives on 'what's good for me' rather than 'what's good for the next generation'.

Climate breakdown and valuing what matters: a key lesson from Covid-19



Prof Ian Gough

Author of 'Heat, Greed and Human Need'

Visiting Professor at LSE

The Covid crisis is questioning many of the hidden assumptions of contemporary capitalist economies. One of these is the nature of economic value – what activities have value, are essential or critical to survival, prosperity, and justice in some way, and what are wasteful or destructive.

This was brought home to me by a mundane list published by the UK government on March 19th, 2020: Guidance for schools, childcare providers, colleges and local authorities in England on maintaining educational provision. It listed those groups of essential workers whose children would be entitled to continuing educational provision after the shutdown of schools, preschools and colleges. In so doing it set out the sectors of the economy 'critical to the COVID-19 response'. The sectors extend way beyond health and care or emergency services. They include farmers, supermarket staff, workers in water, electricity, gas and oil, teachers, telecommunication workers, transport staff, workers in law and justice, religious staff, social security staff and retail banking staff. A similar, but wider, list was published by the government in Ireland.

Identifying essential workers in this way has been anathema to conventional neo-classical economic theory, where any activity is deemed valuable or productive if it is remunerated, whatever its social value or disvalue. A carer equates with a hedge fund manager. So the coronavirus has achieved in a few weeks a shift in perspective unequalled in eight decades. It has begun to question the nature of economic value. Yet a much, much greater crisis is now walking towards us – that of climate and ecological breakdown. What are the lessons we can learn from the above?

I have argued in *Heat, Greed and Human Need: Climate Change, Capitalism and Sustainable Wellbeing* that a value theory to cope with these times must focus not on market exchange value but on sustainable wellbeing. This includes two fundamental components. First, meeting common human needs as the fundamental ethical goal, and second, prioritising provisioning for these needs in a foundational economy (Gough 2019).

First, to understand sustainable wellbeing requires a rigorous theory of human needs. This was the subject of an earlier book I co-authored with Len Doyal which has gained a renewed following in recent years. Unlike wants or preferences, needs are in theory satiable. The distributive principle entailed by human need theory is sufficiency: to bring all individuals up to a threshold (though this can be defined in different ways).

Second, the idea of non-substitutable need satisfiers entails the concept of a "foundational economy" as a network of 'systems of provision' which directly delivers a range of essential need satisfiers in contemporary market economies: utilities, the food system, housing, health, education and care services, emergency services, public administration and retail banking and payments systems (Floud et al. 2018).

There is a close match between basic need satisfiers, critical sectors of the foundational economy and government lists of essential occupations. When we need to identify essential or critical occupations we come back to human need satisfaction and the foundational economy.

This has relevance for radical strategies to tackle the worsening crisis of climate and ecological breakdown. If we are eventually to transition to a post-growth economy we will need to recompose consumption in the rich world: to reduce consumption emissions by switching from high- to low-carbon goods. To make this fair or just would then entail the idea of a 'consumption corridor', between minimum consumption standards, allowing every individual to live a good life, and maximum standards, ensuring a limit on every individual's use of natural and social resources in order to guarantee a good life for others in the present and in the future. This means drawing distinctions between necessities and luxuries; or between necessities, comfort goods, and luxuries. And this takes us back to need theory, and to concepts of universal basic needs and services.

The lessons from Covid-19 about valuing what matters need to be applied to tackling climate breakdown. This needs to happen in such a way as to ensure extensive citizen participation, while at the same time with the irreplaceable contribution of experts too, as the Covid-19 experience has brought home. Examples include the Citizens' Assembly in Ireland and citizens' forums on curbing emissions in Canada, France, and the UK.

The Covid crisis is questioning many of the hidden assumptions of contemporary capitalist economies. Already policy innovations by governments have begun to crack the carapace of business as usual. I suggest that this includes the hegemony of the neo-classical theory of value – that price determines value, and that the notion that distinguishing the social contribution of different sectors, groups of workers and consumption practices is an irrelevance or an impertinence. It is not. It is central to building an environmentally sustainable and just economy.

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A special thank you to Maura Boyle for providing her stunning photographs of Maynooth University Campus for use in this issue of Green Shoots.



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