

# Maynooth Green Campus Report to Faculties

March 2018

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## Application for Green Flag - assessment in April

In January 2018, we submitted our application for the Green Campus Flag. This has been signed off by the Green-Campus Manager, An Taisce's Environmental Education Unit, and will be the basis for our assessment by the Federation of Environmental Education (FEE), the body that oversees the eco-campus programme internationally. We are looking forward to completion of the assessment following a site visit and panel discussions in April, and look forward to raising the flag thereafter. A great deal of work went into the drafting of the application, which runs to nearly 200 pages.

## Energy working group

from Ciaran Coffey MGC energy work group leader.

## MU energy system recommended for ISO50001 certification

Maynooth University has progressed through the Stage 1 audit and Stage 2 audits (13th and 14th of Feb.). ***Out of 378 public bodies Maynooth University will be only one of twenty who have achieved the standard.*** This has been done with minimum resources and the cost is paid for out of "Energy Credits" gained from energy efficiency projects undertaken since 2015. Maynooth Green Campus initiative was an important element of our success as it showed that we had an internal forum to promote Sustainability to the University Community and beyond. Joe Larragy (Chair MGC) adds: Ciaran Coffey, Energy Manager, Campus Planning and

Development Office, deserves great credit for leading this work, which is a huge achievement for the University.

## Green Awards

Maynooth University reached the final (short list) in the public sector organisations category of the Green Awards - which took place on 20th Feb. The awards cover six thematic areas of performance. The competition was tough – unfortunately, we lost out to Tipperary Co. Council.

## Biodiversity Working Group

From Dr Jim Carolan

In 2016 Maynooth campus became a supporting partner of the [All Ireland Pollination Plan](#) (AIPP) which is a collective plan involving numerous stakeholders to reverse the worrying trend of pollinator declines observed over recent years. The National Biodiversity Data Centre coordinates the AIPP and they have produced guidelines and recommendations for different sectors to develop sustainable and pollinator friendly habitats across public and privately held lands.

The activities of the Maynooth Green Campus were recently included in the AIPP Annual Report. The full report is available online at <http://www.biodiversityireland.ie/projects/irish-pollinator-initiative/all-ireland-pollinator-plan/latest-news/> and the text relating to Maynooth University is given below.

- Maynooth University has a clear commitment to promote biodiversity and AIPP guidelines across our campus and wider locality. Our Green Campus Committee and MU Grounds Department coordinate numerous initiatives and activities aimed at developing pollinator-friendly habitats and maximising the biodiversity value of the campus. In addition, we aim to reduce the University's impact on the natural environment. Some of these projects are briefly described below.
- **The MU 10-sites for Biodiversity Project:** Across the campus, 10 sites have been designated 'Managed for Biodiversity' where cultivation and maintenance is kept to a minimum.
- **Campus Habitat and Species Census:** involves the production of comprehensive habitat maps and species records for the campus.
- **Pesticide use:** The use of pesticides across the campus has been drastically reduced. MU Wild Walk: Plans are underway to develop a waymarked walking route around the North and South campuses. A number of bug hotels and honeybee hives are now located on campus grounds. In addition, native wildflower seed mixes and plants are used where possible.
- **Kildare Biodiversity Network:** Through events such as our annual Biodiversity Day (held in conjunction with Kildare Co. Council), numerous groups across the region collaborate *and share expertise and experiences regarding biodiversity practices*.
- Members of the MU Green Campus group regularly organise and host seminars and tours of the campus, attended by staff, students, members of student societies and community groups specifically focussed on highlighting the issues faced by our pollinating insect species.

In November 2017 Mr Stephen Seaman (Grounds Department and MGC member) met with representatives from Intel Ireland (Leixlip) and the Tidy Town committees of Maynooth, Leixlip and Celbridge to explore the possibility of developing the North Kildare Biodiversity Network. The meeting was organized by Intel to create ties with neighbouring town-lands and

organizations with an aim or pooling expertise, development of wildlife corridors and tracking biodiversity initiatives across the region. Additional meetings are planned for 2018.

## On the grounds

From Stephen Seaman

### Coffee grounds on the Campus grounds

Coffee grounds are used by the grounds staff, and have been in use for some years, primarily in the summer months as a natural slug deterrent around herbaceous plants on campus. The amount used depends on what is growing. At present the grounds staff collect coffee grounds from Starbucks, as it is sufficient to meet this purpose, and stored it in bags for use as needed.

Considerably more coffee grounds are available than are needed for this purpose, from other outlets. One suggestion is to use these grounds in existing compost bins and to install compost bins near the bin stores that could be used for Green Waste. The grounds supervisor options will be discussed with Michael Rafter, head of campus services because there are some issues that can arise – vermin and odours – which need to be addressed.

### Dusk bird-walks

Over recent years Green Campus and the Grounds Department have established bird boxes for nesting purposes for a range of different species. Bird Watch Ireland have recently approached us about organising a Dusk bird walk on 9th May 2018. We are very keen to make a success of this initiative and will liaise with BWI to organise the event.

We envisage arranging some short presentations in advance about birds we might see on campus and bird boxes to look out for. On the walk and talk around campus we will listen for various bird calls and seek to identify different species. Further details will follow soon.

## Climate Justice Working Group

- Joe Larragy, Climate Justice WG leader, Dept. of Applied Social Studies

### Social Justice week

MGC played a very active part in reviving Social Justice week (26 Feb – 2 March) this year, in which people from across the university organise events or specially tailor classes to focus on a social justice theme, and in many cases open lectures to other students and staff. Despite the unfortunate arrival of the “Beast from the East, along with the Beauty from the South (Emma), we did manage to get in two days of successful activities this year.

- On Monday, a public lecture by Ian Gough, visiting professor at the LSE on his new book Heat, Greed and Human Need attracted a substantial audience of students and staff. The event was a collaboration between Maynooth Green Campus and the Department of Applied Social Studies.
- On Tuesday morning a round table in the Library with several scholars and policy experts discussed the interdisciplinary challenges of climate change along with Ian Gough.
- Also, on Monday, Prof Peadar Kirby, spoke about a new book, 'The Political Economy of the Low-Carbon Transition: Pathways Beyond Techno-Optimism', he has co-authored with Dr Tadhg O'Mahony. The lecture was attended by a large group of students

- Other events, including stands and demonstrations on recycling organised by Maynooth Green Campus Student Society were impacted by the weather and had to be postponed. Hopefully these can be rescheduled for a new date soon.

### The Global Catholic Climate Movement meetings in Maynooth.

Dr Lorna Gold, of Trócaire, one of the MGC partners, who has contributed a new module in the Social Science degree in 2017-2018, organised a round table with MGC representatives and a number of international faith-based campaigners working to implement the 2015 papal encyclical on climate justice, Laudato Si. The Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM) is growing rapidly and now has over 700 organisation members worldwide. The mission statement of GCCM is: "The Global Catholic Climate Movement serves the Catholic family worldwide to turn Pope Francis' Laudato Si' encyclical into action for climate justice, by undergoing our own ecological conversion, transforming our lifestyles and calling for bold public policies together with the wider climate movement."

### Columba House goes Green

Staff in Columba House, which is the HQ of the Bishops conference, located on the South Campus. Have established a Green Club. Representatives of Maynooth Green Campus met with their committee and exchanged ideas in February. Hopefully this relationship can be developed and sustainability practices extended.