

## Maynooth Green Campus Report to Faculties 20 March 2017

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### Climate Justice

#### Maynooth Green Campus welcomes TCD and NUIG divestment (December 2016)

Maynooth University has no investments in the fossil fuel sector. It was the first University in Ireland to take a public stance based on ethical and fossil-free investment policy, in June 2015. In December 2016, therefore, Maynooth Green Campus issued a press statement welcoming the decision of TCD to divest from fossil fuel investments in the near future. This is a great result from the student-led initiative over the past year, which MGC were happy to support, and the widening and deepening of the movement to divest from industries that contribute to global warming and climate change. €6.1million of Trinity's endowment fund portfolio is in the fossil fuel sector. Earlier in December 2016, NUI Galway announced that it would divest €3.4 million from fossil fuels.

These are significant contributions to the campaign for a post-carbon economy in Ireland, and the efforts to tackle global warming and means that TCD and NUIG have now joined Maynooth University, which adopted a fossil-free policy during 2015. Maynooth University, with Trócaire and Saint Patrick's College Maynooth, who collaborate on best practice through the Maynooth

Green Campus initiative, have worked to promote this movement and have organised a major [Conference on Climate Justice in June 2015](#) and a [Workshop on Ethical Investment in Feb 2016](#).

#### Bill success on Divestment ISIF from Fossil Fuel

In our last bulletin to the Faculties, we noted that MGC, along with 24 other civil society organisations, signed a submission calling for full divestment of the Irish Strategic Investment Fund (ISIF) from fossil fuels, within the next five years and the adoption of a 100% renewables policy for energy investments.

On 19 January, this national campaign to divest the ISIF from fossil fuels efforts was successful in the passage of the second stage of the private members' Fossil Fuel Divestment Bill 2016. Particular credit goes to Trócaire for their leading work in this campaign. Maynooth University too supported the petition. Assuming the Bill goes through all stages, Ireland could become the first country in the world to divest its sovereign wealth fund, worth over €8 billion, from coal, oil and gas.

MGC are committed to further progressing this campaign. Future opportunities in Ireland will arise in the context of the mooted Papal visit in 2018, which will provide a context for campaigning for divestment by the Catholic Church, for which the prospects should be good, given the position adopted by the Papacy in [Laudato Si](#).

#### An Taisce Network Meeting

In February, a number of staff and students participated in the annual Green Campus Network meeting in Dublin. Mr Ciaran Coffey, Energy Manager/ Building services engineer (MU/SPCM), made a comprehensive presentation on behalf of Mr Michael Rafter, Director of Campus & Commercial Services (MU/SPCM). Ciaran, as noted in the last update, is an active member of the Maynooth Green Campus committee, and leads its energy working group. This presentation was covered in the Irish Times article 'Students pull on the Green Jersey'.

#### Application for the Green Flag

We are at an advanced stage in preparing our formal application to An Taisce for the Green Campus Flag. We have been consulting with An Taisce on a report of our progress to date and will be preparing a formal application shortly.

#### Student Participation - Student Society and MSU Senate

A group of students has established [Maynooth University Green Campus Society](#). It will encourage Maynooth Students to become more environmentally aware and educate fellow students through events such as talks, documentary screenings and workshops in order to make our campus a more sustainable place. It has already organised some events. The new Green Campus Senator in the MSU senate is a member of MUGCS.

### Green Procurement

Mr Michael Rafter, Director of Campus & Commercial Services has been implementing a green procurement policy in the catering area. Currently, we understand that among caterers to the University, disposable cups on campus, with the exception still of Star Bucks, are compostable. This means they can be recycled with compostable waste in Co Meath, and we will receive some freshly made compost as part of the arrangement.

### Trócaire: Glas initiative

We have been working with Trociare on climate Justice. However, we recently met with managers in Trócaire to discuss their Glas (Green) programme. This is a plan to green their own operation in relation to waste management, travel (especially air travel), energy, water etc. on their own implementation of their GLAS plan. They are establishing baseline data and benchmarks for best practice and will be updating us on progress. The plan will be rolled out in their HQ initially, then in their operations worldwide. While we are able to make significant inputs to this plan, there may also be learnings for departments and other units on campus from the work being undertaken by Trócaire, which we will feed back to you.

### Marchathon 10,000

Following the very successful participation of staff in the national Step Challenge in September/October 2016, another national initiative, "Marchathon 10,000" is already proving a hit with staff. Over 60 staff members will be participating in teams. The project is to encourage activity and walking, run by National Transport Authority. Further information from

[Dorena.Bishop@nuim.ie](mailto:Dorena.Bishop@nuim.ie)

### Biodiversity

Our biodiversity Working group is chaired by Dr James Carolan in the Biology Department. Additional people have recently joined this exciting working group. Forthcoming activities include:

#### Maynooth University Biodiversity Day

Provisionally scheduled for Wednesday 24 May. Held in conjunction with Kildare County Council as part of their Biodiversity Week. Theme will be the [All Ireland Pollinator Plan](#) and members of the National Biodiversity Data Centre will attend. Maynooth University is now an official partner to the plan.

#### Managed for Wildlife Signage

Grounds staff will erect special signage in areas where biodiversity management practices are in place. We hope in time to develop a "waymarked walking route" for staff, students and members of the public to experience and observe many of the biodiversity hotspots and initiatives.

### Student engagement with biodiversity

There are a number of Biodiversity group projects with students from BI261 (Module Coordinator Veronica Malone). Projects include Bee monitoring walks, [BioBlitz](#) data collation and interviewing members of tidy towns, county councils regarding biodiversity initiatives. Members of the committee are actively engaged with many of our student societies and have organised walks and talks attended by our students and members of the public.

### Biodiversity Monitoring Groups

Invitations are open for staff and students to join biodiversity teams that will engage in various biodiversity initiatives. Training and recording events will be organised and held throughout the year.