

Green Campus report - November 2017

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Application

We have been in contact with An Taisce regarding our draft application for the Green Flag and are following advice on aspects of the format before finalising the application proper.

Biodiversity – meeting with other interests in the North-Kildare areas

Stephen Seaman, grounds supervisor, and MGC committee member, attended a meeting on 8 November in Intel about Biodiversity in North Kildare to discuss biodiversity work in our respective organizations and future collaboration to help the biodiversity in the area. Intel, Maynooth University & St Patricks College, Maynooth Tidy town, Leixlip tidy town, and Celbridge tidy town committees participated. Links are proposed too with other interested

organisations. This initiative flows from ongoing collaboration and events in Kildare including our successful Biodiversity Week earlier this year and promises to promote best practice by mapping biodiversity and developing wildlife corridors in north Kildare in conjunction with the National Biodiversity Data Centre

[Cloughjordan visit by Froebel group](#)

Aoife Titley, Froebel, brought a group of students to Cloughjordan ecovillage over a weekend in October on a study visit. The visit included on-site teaching by Froebel staff and briefings from the Cloughjordan hosts. It worked out well and the students seemed happy! Last year another group comprising a class group doing a module on civic engagement and Green Campus members participated in a visit to the Ecovillage and drew much of value from the experience. All learned a lot. It is hoped to make further visits in coming years.

[Climate Change and social Justice - COP 23 news and Blog](#)

The follow-up from Paris faces some real challenges to raise the level of nationally determined objectives, as they still fall very short of what is needed to keep global warming below 2 degrees, let alone 1.5 degrees. John Sweeney, Emeritus Professor from Maynooth University is attending the UN COP 23 in Bonn and hopefully we will have his blog, as we did from the Paris COP21 in 2015.

[Citizens' Assembly](#)

[Dr Conor Murphy](#) from Maynooth University made a key contribution to the Citizens' Assembly on climate change. It is an excellent outline of the cogent issues and had a very significant influence in the deliberations of the Assembly. The 75-member Assembly voted overwhelmingly to put climate change at the centre of policy and made 13 recommendations. The Stop Climate Chaos coalition described the outcome of the Citizens' Assembly as "a clarion call for the Government to immediately step up climate action" (Irish Times Nov. 5 2017).

[Social Justice Week - Semester 2](#)

With the retirement of Shay Claffey, former chaplain, the Social Justice Week lapsed last year. MGC Climate justice working group is now pulling together previous participants in a new steering committee with a view to re-establishing the very successful week, likely to be in week 2 of Semester 2. We hope that each department will engage with this initiative, for example by dedicating some classroom time to a special session on an important theme, and perhaps opening the session to all students. Other ideas and support are also very welcome at this stage.

Energy upgrades

Energy upgrade on South Campus

Old heating infrastructure on the south campus has posed challenges for a long time. A programme of modernisation including, investment in replacement boilers is underway and will continue over a number of years. While this may lead to some inconvenience at times for staff and students in the buildings affected, it will make a big difference in the long-run.

Energy management on both campuses

Further development of the Building Management System and continued installation of the Energy Monitoring System will improve energy control (consumption) and allow targeting of energy efficiencies. Improvements to plant, equipment and upgrade of lighting will continue to improve comfort levels across the University and deliver energy savings

Bike repair and second hand sales on campus

The successful bike repair service and second-hand bike sales is up and running on the north campus every Wednesday 10am-3pm.

Student Green Campus Society

The new society organised an upcycling workshop, on Thursday, the 9th of November from 10 am until 1pm to explore creative reuse, and transformation of by-products, waste materials, useless, or unwanted products into new materials or products of better quality or for better environmental value.

Change makers event 19th October

Maynooth University was represented at several organisations and campuses including DCU, UL, TCD, UCC, GMIT, IT Tallaght and Sligo University Hospital. Student leaders from various colleges outlined their on-campus sustainability campaigns and shared their experiences of initiating change on their campuses.

Links to learning: Modules on environment

One of the things that Green campus seeks to do is to promote links to learning through the development of new modules with an environmental aspect, especially in fields where the topic may not have been very pronounced in the past. As an example, two new modules have in this context, been developed in the Bachelor of Social Science degree programme. These are SP310, Environment, sustainability and Social Justice, taught by Dr Lorna Gold, and a second year elective, SP260/SP261, Engaging with Civil Society: justice, welfare and the environment. If staff wish to draw attention to new developments in this context we would

like to hear from them in Green Campus as it is important to log all such links to learning. Staff in SPCM too are incorporating climate justice into modules and may develop specific modules, e.g., a postgraduate module on ecology, in moral theology.

[New book on Papal Encyclical](#)

Laudato Si': An Irish Response - Essays on the Pope's Letter on the Environment edited by Sean McDonagh, Veritas. Sean is a Columban missionary who has been writing on the environment for decades. He contributed to Climate Justice 2015, a major conference hosted in Maynooth in 2015. The book includes essays from a variety of disciplines, scholars and advocates for in climate science and others in response to the 2015 encyclical on climate change. The book is relevant to attempts to promote divestment from fossil fuels among faith-based organisations in Ireland. MU has been leading the third level sector in relation to divestment, being the first University in Ireland to declare a fossil-free investment policy and hosting several events to promote awareness of the need to do so more widely.

[New report on the Circular Economy](#)

MGC was represented at the launch of a new National Economic and Social Council report, [Moving Towards the Circular Economy](#) by Simon O'Rafferty: "The research report documents the opportunities and challenges for ten Irish case study organisations as they strive to bring more circular practices to their business and social enterprise models. This 'bottom-up' approach to examining the circular economy provides a key contribution to the emerging debate in Ireland. The Council makes a number of reflections on this research and the potential for an Irish circular economy"

[RE-Use Recycling workshop](#)

Thursday 23 November Maynooth Green Campus are hosting a group, ReUse. They present workshops on Zero Waste, and Reimaging, Repairing and Recycling of waste. The format includes demonstrations on how to create art to inspire waste reduction, Wool workshop, sustainable craft and make your own cloths, clothes and toys. Also a representative from Voice a new environmental NGO who, under the Recycling Ambassador Programme will give a talk on waste recycling, video of a recycling plant in operation and demonstrations of best practice on recycling.

Student Switch-Off initiative

MU is participating with the support of Maynooth Green Campus, in an energy efficiency programme run by Union of Students in Ireland. Student Switch Off is a not-for-profit international campaign, run over three years, encouraging student action on climate change through energy saving, for instance, switching off lights, filling the kettle with only what you need, putting on a jumper and not the heat etc. There will be friendly competitions between on-campus apartments and prizes along the way NUIG, UCC, and DCU are also involved.