

## Maynooth University Biodiversity Day

On the 26<sup>th</sup> May 2017 Maynooth University hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Biodiversity Day to highlight the progress of the [All Ireland Pollinator plan](#) across the region. The AIPP provides guidelines and actions to help protect important pollinating insect species and reverse the dramatic declines observed in the numbers of our native bee species over the past decades. The guidelines are tailored specifically for different sectors including schools, tidy towns, businesses, county councils etc. and we were very lucky to have representatives from each of these sectors present on the day to describe their initiatives. One of the goals of this year's meeting was to highlight the importance of recording pollinator friendly actions on the National Biodiversity database which allows individuals to see their contributions on a local and regional scale. Such activities are important to give members of the public a sense that even small actions can add up to meaningful change.



### Schedule and speakers:

- 09:45 am *Welcome and Introduction*- Dr Jim Carolan (MU)
- 10:00 am *The All Ireland Pollinator Plan*- Prof Jane Stout (TCD)
- 10:45 am *The AIPP and Kildare County*- Bridget Loughlin (Kildare CoCo)
- 11:00 am *Biodiversity on the River Rye* - Teresa O'Brien (Intel Ireland)
- 11:15 am *Biodiversity and Maynooth University Campus*- Stephen Seamen (MU)
- 11:30 am *One Biodiversity action-Many results*- Dr. Gail Maher (MU)
- 11.45 am *Undergraduate Biodiversity Initiatives*- Maynooth University Students
- 12:00 pm *The AIPP and Maynooth Town*- Mary Jennings (Maynooth Tidy Towns)
- 12:15 pm *Honeybees and their forage*- Eddie Hill (OPW and NKBKA)
- 12.30 pm Biodiversity Recording Workshop
- 1:00 pm Lunch
- 2:00 pm *Building Butterfly Habitats*- Jesmond Harding (BCI)
- 2:30 pm *Campus Walk-Experience MU Biodiversity first hand*- Stephen Seamen, Dr. Gail Maher, Dr. Jim Carolan & John Byrne

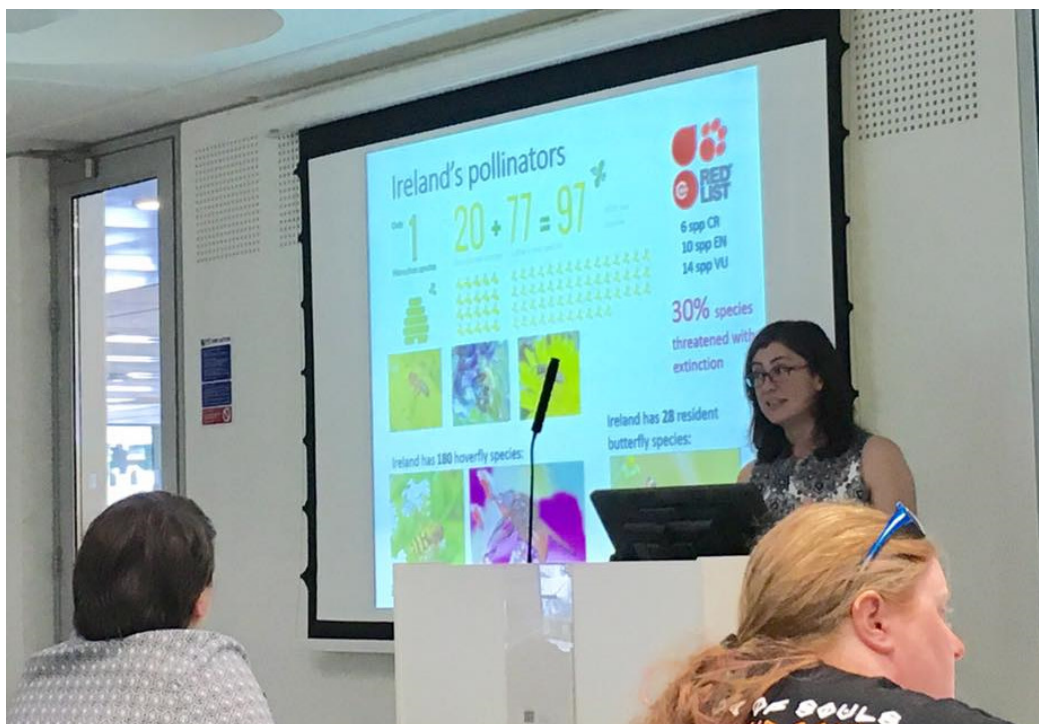
Please contact [James.Carolan@nuim.ie](mailto:James.Carolan@nuim.ie) to confirm attendance



The Biodiversity Day was organised by Dr Jim Carolan (Department of Biology & Maynooth Green Campus Group) and Dorena Biushop (MGC) and was held in partnership with Kildare County Council as part of Kildare Biodiversity Week and Maynooth Green Campus gratefully acknowledge the award of funding for the catering for the day's event.



The event was opened with a plenary lecture by Professor [Jane Stout](#) of Trinity College Dublin who in collaboration with Dr. Una Fitzpatrick of the National Biodiversity Centre was a principle architect of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan. Professor Stout gave an engaging account on the background to the plan covering her early research on bumblebees and how concerns into declining bee numbers and discussion among a wide variety of partners led to the development of an all-island strategy for their protection.



Councillor Bridget Loughlin from Kildare County Council described the changing landscape both literally and metaphorically within the county. Kildare is widely acknowledged as a one of the leading councils to adopt and implement the policies of the AIPP and Councillor Loughlin also described how attitudes are changing across the county and within the council towards biodiversity leading to an acceptance of land managers and developers to incorporate biodiversity protective policies into future plans.

We were delighted to welcome Mrs Teresa O'Brien from Intel Ireland to showcase the fantastic restoration and development of wild areas along the River Rye on Intel's Leixlip campus. Mrs O'Brien described a number of biodiversity initiatives on the campus and how the wild flower meadow and "movement walks" in particular are getting more staff out doors and enjoying Nature.



Mr Stephen Seamen one of our dedicate MU grounds keeping staff described the many biodiversity initiatives currently being conducted across the campus including green roofs, insect hotels, reduced chemical use, bird and bat boxes and a number of wild flower meadows that have been established over the past number of years. The plants that have been found in one of these meadows have been monitored since February of this year by Dr Gail Maher of the MU Department of Biology and Dr Maher reported on the abundance of different plant species found in the meadow, noting that these species would not be present if the usual mowing regimes were followed.



Other speakers on the day included Mrs Mary Jennings of Maynooth tidy towns speaking about the AIPP and Maynooth town, Mr. Eddie Hill of the Office of Public Works and North Kildare Bee Keepers Association teaching us about the different foraging preferences of honey bees and two MU students, Mr. Daire Delaney and Alison Creevey who described the biodiversity projects they worked on as part of a new MU 2<sup>nd</sup> year elective BI261 Science in Society (module coordinator Veronica Malone).



Mr Jesmond Harding of Butterfly Conservation Ireland gave a master class in planting and managing land for butterflies and the day was rounded off by a walking tour of the campus visiting many of the areas currently managed for biodiversity. The walk was led by Mr. Stephen Seamen who described the planning and management of biodiverse rich habitats and areas across the campus. Dr Jim Carolan and Dr. Gail Maher of the Department of Biology were on hand to highlight the increase in both animal and plant diversity recorded on the campus over the past year and Mr John Byrne of the MU bookshop and an expert bee keeper accompanied us on the walk entralling those who attended with interesting facts about our honeybees.



The organising committee wish to express our gratitude again to Kildare County Council for their support and awarding of a Community Heritage Grant for the sum of €450 to go towards the costs of the event.



