



YOUGHAL
BLUE & GREEN
Community Network
'Together we are Stronger'

Annual Report 2023

www.youghalblueandgreennetwork.ie

Facebook @YoughalBlueGreenNetwork

Instagram Youghal_Blue_Green

Email: youghalbluegreen@gmail.com



Keane Park pond



Marram Grass on Pilmore dunes

Introduction

Welcome to our second Annual Report. We hope you enjoy the read and want to get involved with us as we build resilience to climate change. You can take action in collaboration with Network members or make your own changes with what you learn. You can join the Youghal Blue & Green Community Network as a group, school, business or individual. Go to our website for further information, including membership, at www.youghalblueandgreennetwork.ie

We would like to thank all of the many members who contributed to the work of the Network this year. In particular, we would like to thank the officers Maureen Jackson, Treasurer, and Mags Arnold who took over from Teresa Ahearne as Secretary. A special thank you to staff members Gráinne Furey and Deirdre Lane who worked hard over the past year organising events, coordinating projects and providing support to members. We currently have 25 member organisations and 22 individual members.

Members take on many roles, from speaking at events; keeping the Network's administration organised and efficient; sitting on Steering Committees for larger projects, e.g. our Creative Ireland Climate Action 'Pathways' project; attending regional or national events and hosting members at their own organisation's events, e.g. Knockanore Biodiversity Group's guided walk.

It is the members who bring a true sense of community to the Network.



River monitoring



Slob Bank waterway



Bridge from the Slob Bank

Events are led by many members; ideas are welcome from all members; and roles and responsibilities are shared. See <https://www.youghalblueandgreennetwork.ie/contact-us>

We also thank Cumann na Daoine, our host organisation, which has provided support to the Youghal Blue & Green Network from the very beginning. Cumann na Daoine provides direct administrative support (managing accounts and payroll), dedicated office space and access to training rooms and all other facilities in the building, including the Community Café. We, in turn, work with other community workers in the building - ETB, Traveller Project, Local Community Development and Ukraine Resource Centre, linking them into Blue & Green projects and actions and encouraging participation from these groups.

We also offer direct support to community members of the Network, e.g. Clean Coasts, Community Bus, CRY104fm Community Radio, Youghal Community Health Project, Youghal Family Resource Initiative, Youghal Credit Union and all local schools, as well as individual members wishing to work collaboratively with us on projects, e.g. artists and environmentalists.

We look forward to working with you all in the coming year!

Key Community Projects

★ Community Engagement

We organised over **560 events** during 2023, which included workshops, walkshops, forages, surveys, film evenings, presentations and meetings. Over **3,400 participants** engaged across all events.

We also raised awareness of Youghal Blue & Green Community Network by attending and participating in a Speakers Panel at the *Mary Robinson Climate Conference* in Ballina, and in November we hosted a stand, gave a presentation and acted as moderator at the Department of Rural and Community Development conference *Community Climate Action* in Dublin Castle.

Four workshops were offered to members throughout the year:

- (1) *Climate Advocacy*, delivered online by Uplift in December, focusing on improving climate literacy and taking community climate action.
- (2) A workshop delivered by MaREI UCC in October focused on monitoring and recording impact.
- (3) 'Matterport' IT training with Tom.
- (4) In collaboration with Dingle Hub, we shared information and experiences of climate action, visited the Maharees Sand Dune Restoration Project and visited 'My Gug' mini-digester near Clonakilty.



Community Tree event



Clean Coasts walkshop



Knowledge-sharing exchange at Dingle Hub

* Community Garden

The garden location (Golflinks Road) can be seen on Google Maps here: <https://www.google.com/maps/@51.9480839,-7.8532652,17z?entry=ttu>

The Community Garden is now in its second year with approximately 64 Garden Group members working away on a regular basis. Harvests this year included tomatoes, garlic, cabbage, and there were even a few Tasting Days where members prepared food from the garden to share onsite. Our two Community Employment (TÚS and CE) caretakers Philly and Rusty did fantastic work building beds and shelving, planting and creating a new pathway to the tunnel to ensure the gardens are wheelchair accessible. Philly posts opening hours each week into the Garden WhatsApp group so volunteers can plan when to drop in. Philly began training on a horticulture course and it is wonderful to see his skills grow as he becomes a key asset to the garden and its members. Volunteers help with planting, watering, weeding and harvesting. Every few weeks, the Network offers workshops on horticulture, making beds, willow weaving and composting. Niamh Doyle completed her work experience as part of her Permaculture course and, with the help of members Eva, Ally and Robin, created a 'Grow Plan' as well as a three-year plan for the garden. Niamh and Eva compiled



Caretaker Philly



Potatoes on the way!

these in a beautiful book form and both are available to view onsite.

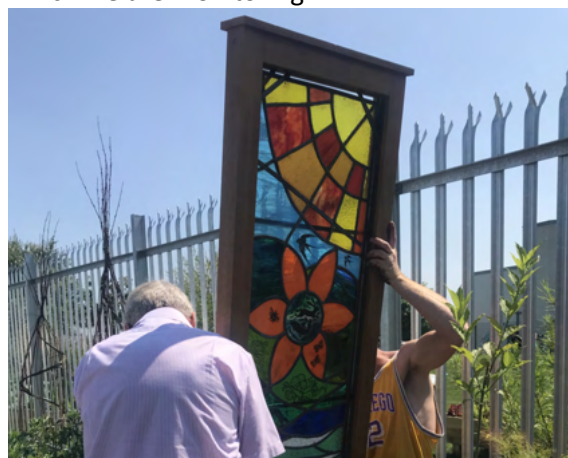
The Community Garden is open every week to the public. New members are very welcome, as are collaborations for projects such as with Youghal Men's Shed, who created bird boxes that were designed with expert advice from Birdwatch Ireland and ETB Gardening and Sustainability tutor Olivia Nolan.



Seed Swap (above) and Bee Talk (below)



Olivia gave an informative talk, and another talk on garden birds was given by Jim Wilson from Birdwatch Ireland's Cork branch. Garden regular Kevin Walshe, who also represents Youghal Active Retirement Association (YARA) on the Blue & Green Network, designed and created a stained glass installation with his class led by ETB art tutor Sue, this beautiful piece of art is admired by all onsite. We explored our willow craft heritage by using willow for weaving, fence-making, dying, rope-making and charcoal, as well as its importance for pollinators. With funds from Burrenbeo Trust, a Heritage Keepers group was formed with Jacob, April, Lizet and Theresa who completed online and in-person workshops to understand the historical importance of willow and how using old crafts is a sustainable alternative in the garden. Pat Deasy, Irish Bee Conservation Project, has given us several talks about the native Solitary Bee. Pat erected educational signage onsite as well as a bee hotel which we are monitoring.



Kevin, Patrick and Sue erect the stained glass installation

★ Energy Info Hub

The Energy Info Hub is located in Cumann na Daoine Community Café and is staffed every Thursday from 11am to 1pm.

Staff offer support, assistance and advice in reviewing the services, grants and options available for retrofitting homes, businesses and community organisations. This support includes energy audits, changing your heating or lighting system, seeking grants and inserting greater levels of insulation into your home or business.

★ National Bike Week

Youghal Blue & Green Community Network secured funding from Cork Sports Partnership for Bike Week from 15-21 May 2023.

Network members got to try out both E-bikes and regular bikes from Youghal Bike Hire who also visited Gaelscoil Choráin to talk about bike maintenance and safety.



Energy Info Hub at CnD Community Café



EV bikes in Green Park



Enthusiastic participation in Bike Week

* Information Videos, including filming

In 2023, with grant support from South and East Cork Area Development (SECAD), Complete Control Films were given opportunity to make six videos of local habitats in Youghal. These are available to view on our website. They are beautifully narrated and visually stunning.

In addition, another Network member helped the Blue & Green Network to develop a 360-degree immersive video of the Network's location at Cumann na Daoine (CnD) and what the Network has to offer, including links to other Blue & Green services and support organisations in Youghal.

We can insert a link to your own organisation's website; just contact us.

Take a look at the videos here:
<https://www.youghalblueandgreennetwork.ie/video-gallery>



VR headset for immersive viewing



Staff training from Kieran McCarthy

* Circular Economy (CE)

Events commenced/hosted in 2023:

- ✓ Hosted a workshop on *Circular Economy Christmas Fashion*
- ✓ Received funding to develop a *Community Circular Economy Action Plan* with VOICE Ireland, inc. development of a local Directory in 2024
- ✓ *Nappy Library Group* meeting regularly
- ✓ *Circular BioEconomy Regional Seeds & Fibre Youghal* being explored
- ✓ *Care and Repair* scheme for Youghal established with SECAD
- ✓ Men's Shed *Library of Things* beginning to grow, e.g. tools, materials, small equipment

★ Community Radio

This year we learned new skills to co-create 3 programmes with CRY104fm Community Radio Youghal, focused on environmental topics that are relevant to the citizens of Youghal. These included programmes about the Network itself, members' own projects, the Keane Park Pond and Clean Coasts beach cleans.

In partnership with CRY104fm, we aim to increase the number of regular Blue & Green programmes in 2024 through dedicating worker time to coordinating and delivering a monthly programme. Participation from member groups and individuals on radio shows is welcome and a great way to get information out to the community, while hopefully gaining interest & support. CRY104fm has been very proactive in supporting the Network throughout 2023.

All programmes are available here as podcasts: <https://www.youghal-blueandgreennetwork.ie/podcasts>

★ Submissions and Projects

Along with Tomar Trust we contributed to the new National Philanthropy Policy
See: <https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/a9795-national-philanthropy-policy-2024-2028/>

★ Tree Planting

The wonderful volunteers at *Trees Please* donated native trees and hedging to us that they had grown locally from seed. We had an excellent Planting Practice workshop with the esteemed botanist and ecologist Ted Cook. As well as hedging, we planted Hazel, Birch, Scots Pine and two Yew trees; these are symbolic as Youghal is named after the Yew.



Tree planting

A longer-term 'Greening' project has been agreed with Cumann na Daoine to transition the use of energy in the building and food waste practices to being more energy efficient & having more sustainable practices.

* Community Bus



In 2023, with the cooperation of the Community Bus Committee, the Network successfully applied to the Cork County Council Recognition Fund for a new Electric Vehicle (EV) bus (€50,000 awarded).

Left: Youghal EV Accessible Community Bus

We also successfully applied to Eirgrid with the Community Bus Committee for funding for an EV wheelchair-accessible car to complement the existing bus (€70,000 awarded). These buses are now serving the people of Youghal, and the Community Bus has increased its availability each week.

We wish the Community Bus group and the residents of Youghal much greener travel for the years ahead.

* Youghal Climate Action Week

Day	Time	Activity
10 TUESDAY	11am	Irish Bee Conservation Project Community Garden P36 X704
	1pm	Digital Decluttering Talk* (1) Contents no Decline
11 WEDNESDAY	3pm	Restoration of Keane Park Pond CRY RAG programme
	7pm	Creative Clay Workshop for Swift Conservation* Bus no 51 Cost €10 with Youghal Clubhouse
12 THURSDAY	11am-1pm	Energy Information Hub Contents no Decline
	11am	Launch of Sea Swimming beach food stall with Youghal
13 FRIDAY	7pm	Movie night, conversations and social Royal Cinema Cost €5 * Compl. for movie screening - 100m film screening by film 20 minutes 100m film screening by film 20 minutes
	11am	Coast Watch Survey Meet at Green Halls with Bus 504. Open to all led by Cork Environmental Forum
14 SATURDAY	3.30pm	Youghal Creative Writers Youghal Library
	3pm	Clean Coasts beach clean Meet at Claspall car park
15 SUNDAY	11am	Planting native trees and shrubs Bus no 51
	2-4pm	Open day Community Garden P36 X704 Sampling of our harvest
16 MONDAY	2.30pm	Beehive Wrap workshop with Youghal Clubhouse

Contact: info@youghalblueandgreennetwork.ie
*please book in advance at the above email.

2023 was the first year we hosted a Climate Action Week in Youghal and it was delivered with great input from many Network members.

Activities included tree planting, beach cleans, workshops with Spring Chickens Older People's Club, a cinema evening, bee conservation, digital decluttering and harvest sampling (in conjunction with the first ever National Community Garden Week) at our Community Garden Open Day, .

We also hosted creative writers at Youghal Library, additional Blue & Green radio programmes and a coastal survey/exploration.

It was a hugely successful week and enthusiasm is building for our 2024 event already.

Creative Climate Action

There were two key initiatives in 2023:

(I) Showcasing Blue & Green creative climate action at the annual *Earth Rising* festival at the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA). This included the screening of *Coillte*, a short film by Irene Tanner; poetry, music and movement by Fergal O' Connor and Lani O'Hanlon and ceramic 'Swift Making' workshops by Martha Cashman, along with a panel discussion hosted by Blue & Green worker Deirdre Lane, with panellists Maria Power, Irene Tanner and Bernie Connolly.

(II) Following our successful application to the Creative Ireland Climate Action Fund, our project *Pathways: Creating Community Resilience* began in 2023, focusing on rising sea levels and flooding in Youghal.

This arts-based project will run until November 2024 and activities include workshops, public meetings and collaboration between local residents and artists on art and audio installations.

The key focus is public engagement in understanding the threat of climate change, and developing community approaches and resilience to mitigate and respond appropriately to the threats inherent in rising sea levels and flooding.



Local artists supported by the Network



Earth Rising Festival



Cllr Mary Linehan-Foley launches Pathways

★ Citizen Science

Our main focus this year has been on water monitoring in the River Tourig, which was led by our member Maureen with the support of Local Authority Waters Programme LAWPRO.

The Blue & Green Network has its own water monitoring equipment which can be borrowed by any member who wishes to carry out a water review.



Examples of Citizen Science activities

Coast Watch surveys at Green Hole and Front Strand followed by beach cleans

Creating habitats for Solitary Bees in the Community Garden

Tree planting (March) in the Community Garden and (October) in Brú na Sí

Hosting Afterschool Programme in the Community Garden with Youghal Family Resource Initiative (FRI): a wormery was established and children took care of the worms

Installation of our own air quality monitoring device at Cumann na Daoine

★ Working with Schools

We are delighted to say we are now working with the four schools located in Youghal. These are Gaelscoil Choráin, Bun Scoil, South Abbey National School and Pobalscoil na Tríonóide secondary school. Projects include beach surveys, visits to the Community Garden and hosting Transition Year (TY) students on placement.

TY students assisted in the Community Garden, prepared workshop materials for outdoor workshops and co-hosted Minister O'Brien's visit in June 2023.



Our TY students



Visit by Minister O'Brien, Department of Rural and Community Development and Cork County Council.

A great launch for the Network, website & local habitat videos.

Community Climate Action Conference, Dublin Castle.

The Network participated along with over 300 Community, Voluntary and Youth Sector delegates who showcased experiences & best practice in community-based climate action.



Above I-r: Deirdre Kelly, DRDC; Ava Farrington, Network member; Lorraine Hogan and Kay Keegan, Cork County Council; Minister O'Brien & guests



Dr Maria Power speaking at the conference

Testimonials from members and their projects

I learned a lot about how community works together to better residents...the importance of community-led projects [and] what Youghal Blue & Green do...how important their projects are for the community. I really enjoyed the workshops I took part in; particularly the one teaching the Women's Group to make beeswax wraps...it's good to work with different age groups. [This] was a valuable experience...I will volunteer in more community projects in the future as I'm interested in helping the community.

Victoria Czop, Transition Year student, Pobalscoil na Tríonóide

The Blue and Green Community Network is inspirational and totally supportive. Their programme of events welcomes everyone to get involved in a wide range of sustainable activities. The Network and its staff empower individuals to channel energy and creative ideas into meaningful outcomes. Their role is critical to the delivery of community-led projects for the longer term. **Ava, Knockanore Biodiversity Group**

Community Bus found the Blue & Green group very helpful ...the funding information [they provided] through meetings with staff in our search for a new electric wheelchair-accessible vehicle for our town was very valuable. Searching for funding is continuous...the improvements they are making to help the environment is crucial for us all. **Tony Phelan, Youghal Community Bus**

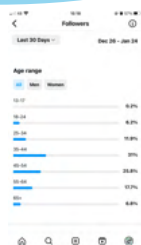
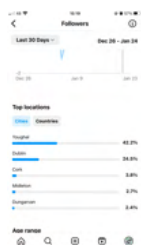
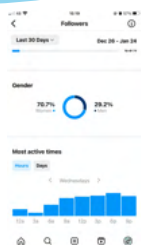
With the support of Youghal Blue & Green Community Network I had the opportunity to screen my new short film Coillte, about monocultures and biodiversity loss, at IMMA's Earth Rising Eco festival and locally for Climate Action Week. It was great to have the opportunity to share and discuss my work in these contexts and to connect with other people who also care about these issues. Presenting my work with the Network meant that people who saw the film had an opportunity to connect and take positive climate action through the Network...very important when dealing with difficult, depressing topics like environmental breakdown. [The Network] empowers people to do whatever they can as individuals [and] collectively-there is an amazing amount of climate action happening in Youghal as a result.' **Irene, local artist**

Social Media

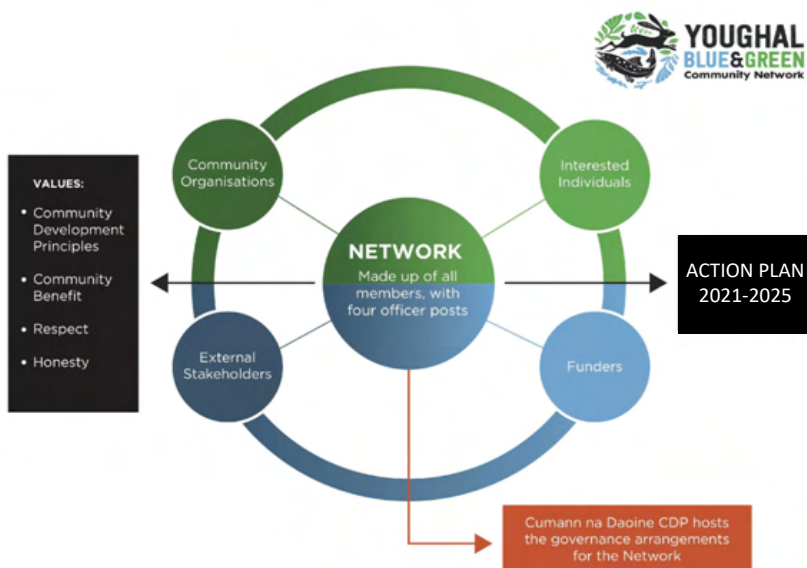


Our online presence continues to grow, with new website, Facebook and Instagram pages. We created a QR code for easy access to the website. Facebook: 627 followers, 72% women & 28% men, age range 25 - 65+

Instagram statistics below



Network Structure



★ Funding

We received funds from the following agencies and departments in 2023:

- * **Department of Rural and Community Development**
(Core funder)
- * **Tomar Trust** (Core funder)
- * Cork County Council
- * SECAD
- * Cork ETB
- * SEAI
- * LAWPRO
- * Creative Ireland Climate Action

The total amount received was **€135,983** and this is included in the audited annual accounts of Cumann na Daoine (published in June each year). These accounts are available to view online at the Companies Office www.companiesoffice.ie and www.cumannnadoine.com when finalised.

★ Staff

There are 2.5 dedicated staff in the Blue & Green Community Network: Gráinne Furey (focus on Blue & Green matters) and Deirdre Lane (focus on Youghal's energy transition to a low carbon community). Dr Maria Power supervises the project on behalf of Cumann na Daoine and the Network. Both staff have worked with commitment, supporting members with funding applications, organising events, workshops and presentations along with promoting the Network to the wider public.

★ Governance

Blue & Green Network staff report to the Network Coordinator, provide quarterly reports to funders and to the Cumann na Daoine Board of Management. Cumann na Daoine is a Company Limited by Guarantee, a registered charity and the employer of Blue & Green Network staff.



Crafting with willow workshop



★ Monitoring and Evaluation

Youghal Blue & Green Network worked in partnership with MaREI UCC to develop a formal evaluation framework and impact pathways to capture the successes and challenges of community-led climate action. This is a three-year project but some of the results are as follows:

Network Survey

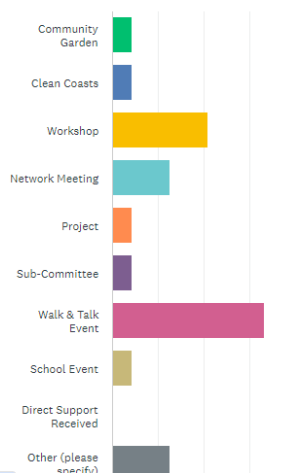
Youghal Blue & Green Community Network carried out an Impact Survey with all members and interviewed group members between October and November 2023.

The results are available separately but here are 2 key pieces of information:

In 1-to-1 interviews, all members (those representing groups only) expressed the value of Blue & Green work for Youghal, and the majority agreed that the key challenges are communication as a two-way process and giving time to the Network.

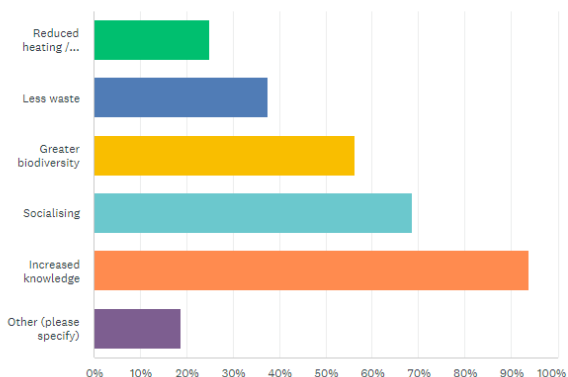
What is the most recent Network activity you took part in?

Answered: 24 Skipped: 0



What benefits have you had from attending events/being a member? Please tick all that apply.

Answered: 16 Skipped: 8



★ Other Actions

Youghal Blue & Green Community Network is always keen to link our local heritage with biodiversity. In 2023, we hosted several guided tours on that theme.

Water Heritage Day 2023

The Network hosted a trip up the Blackwater River for Network members on Tony Gallagher's boat *The Meavóg*. Tony spoke of the history and lore of life for those on the river and its related fishing and other trades. On the same trip, ornithologist Pat Smiddy talked to us about the range of birdlife along the Blackwater. This event was funded by the Local Authorities Water Programme (LAWPRO).

Heritage Keepers

As part of the Network's participation in the Heritage Keepers programme, the Burrenbeo Trust funded several guided tours. Tour Guide Shirley gave our group a most fascinating insight to Youghal's famous landmark the Clockgate Tower. Tour Guide Clifford brought us back in time as we took the walking tour of the town and St Mary's Collegiate church.

These tours are also a great way for members and non-members to meet and share ideas as we usually have refreshments after.



Top-bottom: Pat Smiddy; Oona weaving; IMMA

★ Sustainable Development Goals

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) are targets created by the United Nations as part of their Sustainable Goals Charter.

Youghal Blue & Green Community Network is committed to this United Nations Sustainable Goals Charter and in particular Goals 3 (Good Health and Well-being), 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 10 (Reduced Inequalities), 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), 13 (Climate Action), 14 (Life Under Water) and 15 (Life on Land).



Our Funders



Department of Rural and
Community Development



An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithe agus Pobail

Tomar Trust

National influence, Local implementation



Cork
County Council
Comhairle Contae Chorcaí

SECAD

seai

SUSTAINABLE
ENERGY AUTHORITY
OF IRELAND



cetb

Bord Oideachais agus
Oiliúna Chorcaí
Cork Education and
Training Board



HE
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

BIM
Ireland's
National
Development
Agency

Local Authority
Waters
Programme
vibrant communities | catchment assessment | healthy waters

Clár Éire Ildánach
Creative Ireland
Programme



Our membership includes the following organisations:

Bee Conservation Ireland, Brú naSí, Bunscoil, Clashmore/Kinsalebeg Community Council, Clean Coasts, Community Garden Group, Community Health Project, Community Radio Youghal, Cork County Councillors, Cumann na Daoine, Eco Congregation Ireland, Foróige, Gaelscoil Chorcaí, Green GAA, Knockanore Biodiversity Group, Links Co-Op, Pobalscoil, Youghal Active Retirement Association, Youghal Community Bus, Youghal Credit Union, Youghal Tidy Towns.

*Together
We are
Stronger*