

Sustainable Skerries

Project: Sustainable Skerries
Where: Skerries, County Dublin
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Sustainable Skerries in North County Dublin was awarded the Sustainable Development Award, which is a special award under Tidy Towns. The award recognises communities that are putting Sustainable Development principles into practice.

Sustainable Skerries is a Transition Town initiative. A Transition Initiative is a community-led response to the pressures of climate change, fossil fuel depletion and increasingly, economic contraction. Sustainable Skerries was established by local people working on a voluntary basis to move Skerries to a more sustainable and resilient community. Sustainable Skerries is focusing on several areas that can help move the town down a more sustainable path.



Food

Sustainable Skerries has set up the Skerries Allotments on the Golf Links Road. The first allotments opened in February 2011. It is a community based project on seven acres of land owned by Fingal County Council with 240 individual allotments. Since the land has been allocated for allotments, Sustainable Skerries have organised work parties (meitheal) with over 60 people of all ages attending some of them. The allotment scheme includes organic, conventional and transitional allotment plots. The design of the allotment field includes a community space used for social gatherings of the allotment holders, a trading place for excess produce, education sessions and somewhere to just sit down and share gardening stories and a cup of tea. Skerries Allotment group is responsible for the organisation of supporting activities, such as compost and manure collection, improvements to site conditions and facilities, fundraising, social events and providing support to new and less experienced allotment holders.



The Community Harvest Group is a Community Supported Agriculture scheme. Community Supported Agriculture is where local people partner with a local grower to share the risks and rewards that small producers face every year. The aim of the initiative is to develop stronger links between the farmer and consumers (or members). The farmer knows they have a definite market for their produce and the growers know where their food comes from. The 28 members pay a weekly fee and in return receive a box of organic locally grown vegetables and eggs. Members also receive a monthly newsletter with farm updates and recipes for cooking vegetables.

Water

Sustainable Skerries water group was established to encourage conservation of water in Skerries, particularly through identifying ways to reduce water usage and promote rainwater harvesting. The Water Group plan to work closely with Fingal County Council to reduce the amount of leaks in the Skerries water system, so improving the town's water resilience.

Energy

Sustainable Skerries Energy group are working with Skerries Community Centre. They have conducted an energy audit of the centre buildings evaluating electricity, oil and water usage for the centre. The Energy Group has made several changes and is working on a complete overhaul of the heating system to make it more efficient.

Skerries is part of the Energy Smart Communities initiative which facilitates local communities to improve the energy efficiency of their homes and businesses through better insulation, more efficient lighting and other energy saving measures. This project is run in conjunction with Codema (www.codema.ie), the energy agency for Dublin.

Sustainable Skerries hope to develop local renewable energy sources in the future.

Education and Awareness

Sustainable Skerries has held several public meetings discussing issues such as local sustainability, peak oil, food miles, climate change and community resilience. They also held a global café event. Sustainable Skerries is working with the transition year students in Skerries Community College in the area of sustainable development.

Sustainable Skerries has had a significant impact on the sustainable development and awareness of environmental issues within Skerries since its foundation in 2009. The projects are long term and community based and are aimed at improving the town's Community Resilience protecting it against future energy and food shocks.



Transition Town Donabate Portrane

Project: Transition Town Donabate Portrane

Where: Donabate and Portrane, North Dublin

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Transition Town Donabate Portrane (TTDP) in North Dublin was one of three highly commended awardees of the Comhar SDC Sustainable Development Award, which is a special award under TidyTowns. The award recognises communities that are putting Sustainable Development principles into practice.

TTDP, like Sustainable Skerries, is a Transition Initiative that aims to respond to the pressures of climate change, fossil fuel depletion and economic contraction and is community led.



TTDP have been involved in setting up a new food market which runs every Saturday. The purpose of this project is to get local people buying and consuming food from the local area. All stall holders are from the vicinity of Donabate and Portrane. The Farmer Market has stalls selling fish, cakes, bread, organic meat, vegetables, jams, tea, coffee and home knits.

TTDP are proposing to bring the old gardens at St Ita's in Portrane into community use and ownership. St Ita's originally had a working farm and orchard that supplied food for the surrounding area and has historical significance. The farm contained walled gardens, a red brick outhouse and glasshouses. The TTDP plan is to reinstate the area as a community farm and orchard.

Due to the increase in people who are keeping a few chickens in their gardens, TTDP have started a new group called Chickenlink to share knowledge, equipment or to band together for discounts on materials. Growing on this idea, TTDP have recently set up Skillslink in which volunteers pass on traditional skills, from cooking to maintenance and repair, in a home based setting free of charge.



Transition Town Donabate Portrane (TTDP) have also been involved in:

- Launching a community and food growing wall planner, which was supported by local business and went out to over 3000 households in the community.
- Arranging screenings of films around climate change and peak oil and have held discussion nights.
- Organising a book swap, car boot sales and the nearly new sale (baby and child equipment sale).
- An allotments group in Turvey allotments.

TTDP purchased a community apple press with prize money from the Comhar sustainable development award. The press is used at the weekly Saturday market. Apples from the disused orchards around Donabate have been made into apple juice. Residents have been invited to bring along their own apples and bottles so they can juice their apples free of charge. The leftover apple pulp is used for chicken feed for the Chicken Link group.

Emly

Project: Emly TidyTown
Where: Emly, Tipperary

Emly TidyTown was one of three highly commended awardees of the Comhar SDC Sustainable Development Award, which is a special award under TidyTowns. The award recognises communities that are putting Sustainable Development principles into practice.

Emly is involved in the Green Home programme which is administered and judged by An Taisce. The Green Home programme is an extension of the Green Schools Programme and seeks to reduce waste, conserve water, save energy and reduce transport use.

The committee put together a leaflet on energy, water, transport and waste and distributed to all in the community. It is also available in local shops.

Emly have been involved in reducing energy use. Emly TidyTown took part in the energy vampire challenge and stopped using the dryer, turned off electrical appliances from standby, turned off lights when not in use and replaced bulbs with energy saving bulbs. The committee held a workshop with national school students and have previously been involved in an energy saving project with South Tipperary County Council and Tipperary Energy Agency, where they saved 4% energy over a six month period.

Emly have supplied the community with water butts at a reduced rate and have put water butts on the Main Street and public buildings for watering flowers. As a group Emly Tidy Towns have been practicing water conservation in the home.



Emly took part in the slim your bin challenge which encourages people to look at reducing the amount of waste they produce and recycle as much as possible. They have revamped the recycle centre with a bin and flower pot made from recycled cans.

They also made a greenhouse out of used milk cartons and sweet lids with the school children.

They are at present starting a new project doing a waste audits in local businesses.





Kill TidyTown

Project: Kill TidyTown

Where: Kill, Kildare

Kill was one of three highly commended awardees of the Comhar SDC Sustainable Development Award, which is a special award under TidyTowns. The award recognises communities that are putting Sustainable Development principles into practice.

Several scenic walks have been developed in Kill to encourage people to walk and cycle and to provide space for biodiversity. Native trees have been planted to assist nesting. Wildlife corridors have been developed with adequate cover along a considerable distance and all habitat types have been extended. There has been a noticeable increase in wildlife following increased ground cover. The planted areas now host many hedgehogs. A log habitat, bat boxes and a ladybird hibernation home have generated huge interest in the local school. The arboretum was planted with the school children and they have their own individual trees. They have put additional interpretive panels in place.

Kill has added a compost area and a leaf mould recycling area to the recycling centre.