



Towns and Cities, Growing Greener





The historic heart of Limerick city

Limerick at a Glance

Strategically located on the edge of the Atlantic, Limerick is Ireland's third largest city. Sitting on the banks of Ireland's mighty River Shannon, Limerick has a population of almost 95,000 and covers an area of 59 km².

Why Limerick Won

Limerick won the **European Green Leaf Award 2020** for its continual involvement in several influential green projects, such as the Smarter Travel City and for recently becoming Ireland's first Lighthouse Positive Energy City. Limerick also delivers a host of local and regional activities, ensuring wide-reaching citizen engagement. These include the 'All Ireland Pollinator Plan' and circular economy programmes, like the Repair and Reuse Directory and the popular 'Refill' campaign for bottles.

A Green City

Climate Change and Energy Performance

Limerick City and County Council was the first public body in Ireland to install solar photovoltaic (PV) panels on its buildings. Today four of the city's buildings have a combined total of 40 kW PV panels, resulting in a 20% improvement in energy efficiency to date.

Limerick has the highest percentage of energy efficient home upgrades in Ireland, with 25% of all homes being upgraded under the nationwide Better Energy Homes insulation programme, since 2009. Limerick will also be Ireland's first EU Lighthouse Smart City under the Positive Energy City Exchange, a €20m EU Horizon 2020 project. Lighthouse cities develop and test integrated innovative solutions at district scale. Limerick City will cooperate with other European cities to develop a series of demonstration projects on how to become smart positive energy cities.

Green Facts

- 2.1 GWh of energy will be created from renewable resources as a result of Limerick's Positive Energy Block (PEB). The Limerick PEB will also establish Ireland's first Community Electricity Grid and a local energy market
- 25% of homes in Limerick have been upgraded under Ireland's Better Energy Homes insulation programme resulting in annual energy savings of 78 GWh each year
- 40 kW of solar photovoltaic (PV) panels installed on Limerick's Council buildings since 2008 have resulted in 20% improved energy efficiency
- 2.5 ha of public green areas are currently in a rewilding project to encourage biodiversity and create additional habitats within the city for pollinators
- With over 1,000 downloads, Limerick's Invasive Species App is helping to prevent further destruction of native flora and fauna
- With 215 bikes and 23 bike stations, Limerick's Bike Share scheme has become a popular public transport option
- 17 recycling points for household recycling in Limerick City diverted 864 tonnes of glass, aluminium cans and steel cans away from landfill in 2018
- 72 tonnes of textiles were collected in the city's nine free recycling points in 2018
- Every year, over 20,000 volunteers take part in Team Limerick Clean-up (TLC) - Ireland's largest one-day annual spring clean!
- All 59 schools in the city are involved in the National An Taisce Green Schools Programme

Sustainable Urban Mobility

Limerick actively encourages more sustainable modes of travel within the city. It has improved infrastructure for walking, cycling and public transport. Cycling is encouraged throughout Limerick City and a shared walk and cycle way of more than 3 km was developed linking the city centre with the University of Limerick, via a popular residential area along the river and canal.

Throughout the city, Limerick has 23 bike share stations, which accommodate 215 bikes. Three city centre car parks also have dedicated secure bike lockers. Car sharing is promoted with eight dedicated on-street parking spaces for 'car club' users. There are eighteen free charging points for electric vehicles (EV) and EV drivers can avail of four hours free parking within the city.

Nature, Biodiversity and Sustainable Land Use

Limerick recognises the importance of nature, biodiversity and the conservation of natural assets. The city successfully integrates land use planning, landscape and biodiversity conservation at several levels. The Living Limerick programme captures citizen engagement, while the Green Schools initiative is a strategic way to educate children on the environment.

In 2018, Limerick began a pilot urban rewilding project to encourage biodiversity and create additional habitats for pollinators within the city. The project is being monitored to manage invasive alien species.

Air Quality and Noise

Limerick is committed to improving air quality and has stepped up monitoring. Three continuous particulate monitors were installed in the city in January 2017, which also display live indicative air quality data to the public. In May 2018, further monitors were added to measure nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, ozone and carbon monoxide.

The city also offers grants to carry out domestic thermal upgrades and is encouraging citizens to leave their cars at home by providing better public transport infrastructure. The Smarter Travel Initiative helps to improve public awareness.

Limerick has also, in accordance with the EU Environmental Noise Directive guidelines, established noise maps and action plans in an effort to monitor and assess the effectiveness of actions taken to tackle environmental noise. It currently has a network of four 'Type 2' sound level meters in the city, which record noise levels continuously and provide real time data.

Waste and Circular Economy

Limerick City and County Council is the lead authority delivering Ireland's Southern Region Waste Management Plan 2015-2021, for waste prevention, management and planning. The city operates a three-bin system for separate collections of dry recyclables, organic waste and residual waste. The kerbside system is supported by other recycling facilities in the city, including a network of 17 recycling points for household recycling in Limerick City.

Mungret Civic Amenity Centre is a state-of-the-art facility, provided by the city, to facilitate reuse and recycling of a wide range of materials including metal, lightbulbs, bikes, books, paints, Styrofoam, plastic film, and mattresses. Green waste is accepted for composting, while electric and electronic waste and some household hazardous waste is also collected for safe disposal. Items that are suitable for reuse are set aside for the public to take away.



Swans on the River Shannon

An Environment Awareness Officer is employed to coordinate initiatives as citizen engagement is key to reducing waste and keeping Limerick clean. A variety of behavioural change campaigns are undertaken to engage citizens and local stakeholders on waste and resource management, such as the #RunReuseRefill and the 'Limerick Going for Gold' programme.

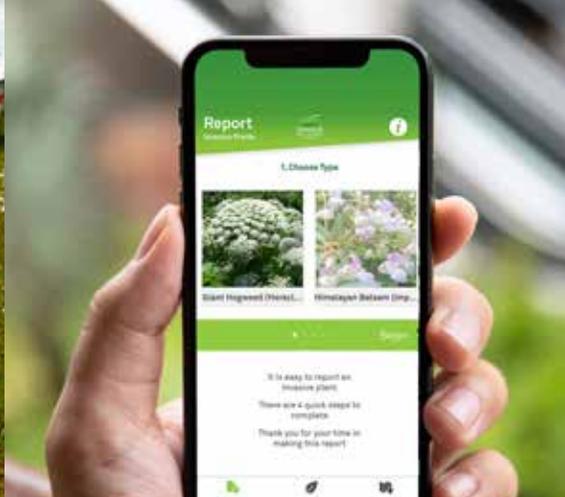
Team Limerick Clean-up (TLC) takes place every Easter and is the largest one-day clean up in Ireland. In its first year (2015) over 10,000 people participated; while in 2019 almost 21,000 volunteers from 646 separate groups participated.

Water

The local water treatment plant has been upgraded many times. The plant currently treats and delivers 48,000-50,000 m³ of water daily. This is about two-thirds of the plant's total capacity. 60% of the water from the plant is consumed by residents of the city, with the remainder supplying parts of the surrounding Counties of Limerick and Clare.

Waste water from the entire city of Limerick is collected and treated before discharging into the River Shannon. This is also of utmost importance for local wildlife such as the Atlantic Salmon and the European Otter, as the lower Shannon is a protected, designated Natura 2000 site¹.

¹ <https://natura2000.eea.europa.eu/>



Corbally Meadow

Limerick's Invasive Species App

European Green Leaf 2020

Biodiversity will play a key role in the events and activities for Limerick's European Green Leaf year. The Council plans to create a living wall at its headquarters, City Hall, to surround it with vibrant wildlife. With wildflowers on the roundabouts and rewilding taking place in the meadows, Limerick will be a beacon of nature walks.

With air quality and noise constantly being monitored, quiet areas of the city can offer a tranquil environment, and are easily found on the Hush City mobile App.

Sustainability will be another major factor for Limerick in 2020. Upcycling events and workshops will be held throughout the year to highlight the importance of a circular economy. Limerick's wide variety of vintage and second-hand shops will also be showcased.

The Council also aims to work with the entire community and businesses to reduce the amount of single-use plastic in Limerick.

Water will be another priority, with drinking-water fountains being rolled out across the city, along with the continued growth of the Refill Ireland initiative².

Events include a Green Procurement webinar for local authorities and public bodies in November 2020; 'greening' Limerick's annual Saint Patrick's Day Festivals by exploring environmental initiatives in creative and engaging ways; and hosting Ireland's Buzzing, an international Pollinator Conference in 2021.

A packed programme of events is available at www.Limerick.ie/European-Green-Leaf-City

The global COVID-19 pandemic has brought unprecedented challenges to all of us. It is also resulting in a number of challenges for Limerick and all other cities throughout the world. While it is the number one priority to save lives and protect Europeans, Limerick is working hard to ensure essential services are maintained during the crisis including waste regulation, water services, and air quality and noise monitoring. In spite of this pandemic, as a European Green Leaf, Limerick is adaptable and plans to carry out as much of its programme as possible with certain events being moved online or postponed to 2021.

²<https://www.refill.ie/>

European Green Leaf Award Winners

- Limerick 2020
- Mechelen 2020
- Cornellà de Llobregat 2019
- Horst aan de Maas 2019
- Leuven 2018
- Växjö 2018
- Galway 2017
- Torres Vedras 2015/2016
- Mollet del Vallès 2015/2016





European Green Leaf Award

The European Green Leaf Award is a competition aimed at towns and cities across Europe, with a population of 20,000 to 100,000, which recognises a city's commitment to improving the environment. It is the partner competition of the European Green Capital Award for cities over 100,000 inhabitants. Limerick in Ireland and Mechelen in Belgium are the joint European Green Leaf Award winners for 2020.

Former winning cities include: Leuven (Belgium), Galway (Ireland), Horst aan de Maas (The Netherlands), Cornellà de Llobregat, and Mollet del Vallès (Spain). Torres Vedras (Portugal) and Växjö (Sweden).

The European Green Leaf and European Green Capital Awards are initiatives of the European Commission. For more information about the winners, how to apply for the Awards, how the winners are selected, and for any other questions, please visit our website below.

Comórtas is ea an Gradam don Dhuilleog Ghlas Eorpach a dhírítear ar bhailte agus ar chathracha ar fud na hEorpa, ina bhfuil idir 20,000 agus suas le 100,000 áitritheoir, lena n-aithnítear tiomantas cathrach don timpeallacht a fheabhsú. Is é comórtas comhpháirtíochta an Ghradaim don Dhuilleog Ghlas Eorpach le haghaidh cathracha ina bhfuil os cionn 100,000 áitritheoir. Is iad Luimneach in Éirinn agus Mechelen sa Bheilg comhbhuaiteoirí na Duilleoige Glaise Eorpaí do 2020.

I measc cathracha a bhuaigh roimhe seo tá: Leuven (an Bheilg), Gaillimh (Éire), Horst aan de Maas (an Ísiltíre), Cornellà de Llobregat, agus Mollet del Vallès (an Spáinn). Torres Vedras (an Phortaingéil) agus Växjö (an tSualainn).

Tionscnaimh de chuid an Choimisiúin Eorpaigh is ea na Gradaim don Dhuilleog Ghlas Eorpach agus Phríomhchathair Ghlas na hEorpa. Chun tuilleadh eolais a fháil faoi na buaiteoirí, conas iarratas a dhéanamh ar na Gradaim, an dóigh a roghnaítear na buaiteoirí, agus faoi cheisteanna ar bith eile, tabhair cuairt ar ár suíomh gréasáin thíos.





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