LIMERICK European Green Leaf Award Winner 2020



EUROPEAN GREEN LEAF

An initiative of the European Commission

FINAL REPORT



Comhairle Cathrach & Contae Luimnigh

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Limerick City & County Council

INTRODUCTION

The European Green Leaf Award (EGLA) is open to towns and cities with between 20,000 and 100,000 inhabitations, to recognise and promote their efforts towards better environmental management and outcomes.

Limerick was awarded the title for 2020 in conjunction with Mechelen in Belgium. Limerick, was particularly commended for its ongoing investments leading to improved air quality and noise levels in the city.

Winning the European Green Leaf Award provided Limerick City and County Council with a unique opportunity to showcase Limerick's environmental achievements, raise awareness of environmental issues and deepen the commitment of all sectors of the community to long term sustainability.

The impact of Limerick's European Green Leaf Award will continue long into the future: while our formal celebration year has ended, Limerick will always remain a European Green Leaf City and will work hard to create a liveable, healthy, carbon neutral, green city for the benefit of all and to lead others by example.



Members of EGLA Team Team Receiving Limerick's Award

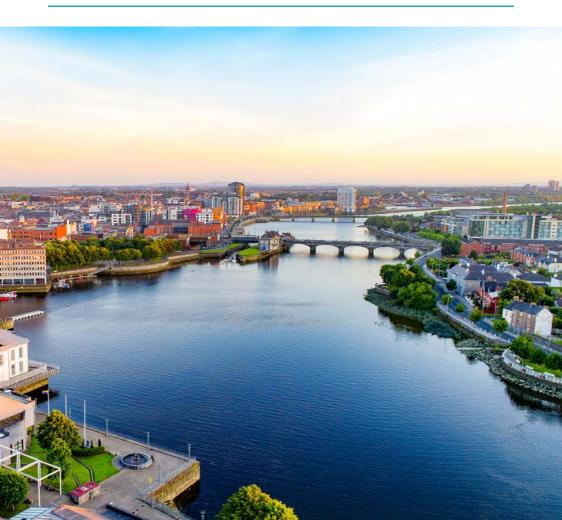
IMPACT OF COVID-19

It is not possible to speak about 2020 with mentioning Covid 19. Limerick had planned an ambitious programme of events for its EGLA celebration year. While this got off to a great start in early 2020, Ireland recorded its first case of Covid 19 on 29th February 2020 and restrictions were introduced shortly afterwards. This meant we had to very quickly rethink our programme for the year and find a different way to deliver the European Green Leaf message.

We developed a programme of online webinars and other online resources



which spoke to the various themes of the European Green Leaf Programme. While we worried that this might lessen our ability to engage the public, in reality, the webinars allowed us to achieve a far greater reach than might otherwise have been the case.





EUROPEAN GREEN LEAF THEMES

Our flagship event for the year was to have been Ireland's Buzzing: An International Conference on Pollinator Conservation. The event was due to be held on the 20th and 21st May 2020 and all preparations had been completed, with over 300 delegates registered. So it was with very heavy hearts we postponed this event. In consultation with our organizing parter, the National Biodiversity Data Centre, we have rescheduled this event for March 2022, when we hope Covid 19 will be behind us and a physical event will be possible. We had also planned a national conference on River Restoration for Sept 2020. Again this had to be deferred because of Covid, however we delivered this conference online in March 2021.

Other notable events which were cancelled were the St. Patrick's Day Parade and the Great Limerick Run. Both of which were to have had a sustainability/European Green Leaf focus.

LIMERICK'S GREEN LEAF YEAR

EUROPEAN GREEN LEAF THEMES

The following sections describe the various events held throughout Limerick's European Green Leaf Year. Many other environmental and sustainability initiatives and activities took place in Limerick during 2020, but here we just describe the events that were specifically planned in celebration of our European Green Leaf Award and which would not have happened otherwise.

DECEMBER 2019 Unveiling of the European Green Leaf Plaque

Limerick's celebration of its year as a European Green Leaf City began with the unveiling of the European Green Leaf Plaque on the wall of the Council's Corporate Headquarters in Merchant's Quay on 9th December 2019.

The plaque was unveiled by Mayor Michael Sheahan, who expressed his pride in the fact that Limerick had been chosen as a green ambassador, but also highlighted the challenges associated with moving towards a more sustainable future.

The plaque was placed in a small green space beside the main entrance. The idea behind choosing this location was that, over the course of the EGLA year, this area would be transformed into a haven for urban biodiversity and provide an exemplar of what could be done in a small urban space to welcome wildlife in.



Unveiling of the Limerick's European Green Leaf Plaque at Merchant's Quay on 9th Dec 2019

JANUARY 2020

DROWNING IN PLASTIC - OFFICIAL LAUNCH EVENT JACKIE MC GRATH

The official launch of Limerick's European Green Leaf year was held on Thursday 23rd January in the Council's Corporate Headquarters at Merchant's Quay, Limerick. Over 100 people attended representing a broad range of sectors including business, community, education and environment.

Attendees were treated to traditional music provided by a local group of very talented young musicians.

Speakers on the night included Mayor Michael Sheahan and Minister of State Patrick O'Donovan who formally launched Limerick's year.

Following the speeches, an informal reception was held to allow those present to further enjoy the music, art and refreshments and also to network with others interested in sustainability issues.

All marketing materials used at the launch event were made from recycled bottles



Mayor Michael Sheehan speaking at the official Launch of the EGLA year

EVENTS PROGRAMME AND WEBSITE

Also on January 23rd 2020, the EGLA programme was published and officially launched in Limerick. The **programme** was printed on recycled stock. Printed copies were distributed across Limerick city with a digital guide promoted across Limerick City and County Council's social media channels.

Social media assets/gifs were also created to enhance the marketing of planned events.

A **<u>dedicated website</u>** hosted on Limerick's official digital platform, Limerick.ie, went live on the same day.

However, due to Covid 19, this early programme had to be significantly revised and an updated digital events guide was published on the EGLA webpage, with links for registration to online events

ENVIRONMENTAL ART EXHIBITION

"Let's Think About Consumption" was an exhibition of artwork on environmental themes by various Limerick schools, colleges and individual artists.

Over 500 people including 100 trainee teachers from Mary Immaculate College received a guided tour of the Exhibition in Istabraq Hall, Merchant's Quay in January and February 2020.

"Let's Think About Consumption" challenges us to think about what we consume, bring us beyond the idea of 'reduce, reuse and recycle', to a more conscious prevention of waste in the first place.





Youth climate activist Saoirse Exton examines the "Drowning in Plastic" Art Installation which was part of the "Let's Think about Consumption" exhibition

FEBRUARY 2020

TIDY TOWNS SEMINAR

"Tidy Towns" is a network of volunteer community groups who aspire towards making their local towns, villages and city areas more attractive and livable. They are one of the most active, empowered and effective volunteering networks in Ireland. Every year, they compete in a national competition where their efforts are scored under a range of headings and each group works long and hard to improve their scores year on year.

In recent times, the competition has become more and more focused on sustainability and, through this, local groups have become more aware and engaged with issues such as biodiversity, waste management and climate change. Tidy Towns groups are seen as a key group in delivering environmentally positive change at local, grass roots level.

Therefore, as part of Limerick's European Green Leaf celebrations Limerick City and County Council hosted a free Tidy Towns seminar on Tuesday 11 February 2020. The aim of the seminar was to support groups with their ongoing work and to raise awareness of the actions they could take in relation to the environmental themes within the competition. Over 80 Tidy Towns volunteers from across Limerick attended.



EGLA team member, Sinead McDonnell, Guest Speaker Mary Keenan and Deputy Mayor Adam Teskey at the Tidy Town's Seminar

LET'S TALK ABOUT CLIMATE ACTION WORKSHOP

There was full attendance at this workshop with participants from Tidy Towns and other voluntary groups, 3rd Level colleges, the local business community, Limerick Clare Energy Agency and Limerick City and County Council. Participants were given an overview of the science of climate change, an explanation of the terminology used along with the need to work together across all sectors to find solutions. There was also a workshop element where the participants worked together in groups to determine possible measures for both climate mitigation and adaptation. These measures were divided into immediate, short-term and long term measures.

ENERGY SOLUTIONS INTERACTIVE DISPLAY

Over 100 people visited the Energy & Environmental Awareness Hub in Merchant's Quay. It included information on Self-Assessment Energy Audits, a Pacman Energy Game along with practical examples of energy efficient lighting, insulation etc. Along with an Energy Quiz with a €50 winner's prize, SEAI brochures and information on how to secure Energy Reduction Grants. The display was very well received.



Impact Energy Efficiency Information Hub at LCCC Office Merchant's Quay

MARCH 2020

LIMERICK ST PATRICK'S DAY PARADE

Limerick St. Patrick's Festival 2020 parade theme was to be 'Our Future is Green' to celebrate Limerick's designation and encourage participating businesses, community, sporting, and voluntary groups to showcase their green credentials. However due to Covid-19, a physical parade did not take place.

DON'T MOW LET IT GROW

The simplest thing that can be done for the natural environment is often nothing! As part of our commitment to the All Ireland Pollinator Plan and in celebration of our European Green Leaf Year, Limerick City and County Council urged the public to "Let it Bee". We identified a number of road verges around the city where grass and wildflowers would be left uncut until the Autumn in order to provide food for wild bees and other pollinators. In September, these areas will be cut down and the cuttings removed. This will reduce the nutrient levels in the soil thus encouraging wildflowers to naturally colonise the areas.

This campaign was launched at the end of March with a press release and social media campaign. Signage was erected to inform the public, reassure them that we weren't just being lazy and to encourage them to do the same.



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National Biodiversity Data Centre

Let it Bee" sign in place at Road Side, where the verge will be left uncut until Autumn

APRIL WHAT'S THAT BUZZ

Limerick City and County Council were delighted to support the completion and publication of this wonderful e-learning module on the identification and recording of Irish Bumblebees, through the EGLA programme.

The module was developed by local zoologist and bee expert Liz Gabbett in consultation with the National Biodiversity Data Centre. However, due to a lack of funding, the module had never been completed and published. Through the EGLA programme, LCCC provided the funding which allowed this great resource to be made available to the public. It is now hosted on the National Biodiveristy Data Centre's website and available also through Limerick.ie Link to module **here**



What's That Buzz was completed and published with support from the European Green Leaf Programme

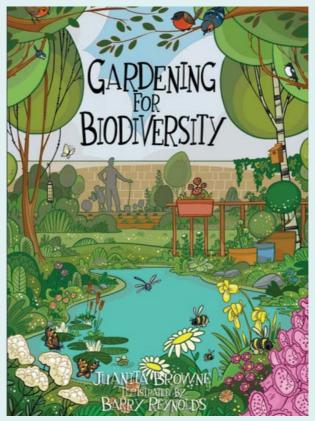
MAY

GARDENING FOR BIODIVERSITY WEBINAR

This was the first in the series of webinars which replaced the physical events planned for the year. The message from this webinar was that, as more land is developed for housing and infrastructure and as intensive agriculture becomes the norm, nature is being 'squeezed out'. If we want to do something about this, we could decide to start to create change right outside our own doors: private gardens represent a huge potential habitat and refuge for Ireland's pressured wildlife. The webinar highlighted the simple things we can all do to make our gardens, no matter how big or small, more attractive for wildlife.

The webinar was presented by Juanita Browne of the National Biodiversity Data Centre who introduced the audience to the beautiful <u>Gardening for Biodiversity</u> <u>Booklet</u> produced by Juanita in association with local authority heritage officers.

Webinar Attendees: 174 YouTube Views: 993 Video Link



Gardening for Biodiversity Booklet

JUNE

REDUCE YOUR CARBON FOOT PRINT - ONE STEP AT A TIME.

The Carbon Foot Printing webinar gave an overview of the Climate Crisis, information on the Limerick Clare Energy Agency, outline of what is involved in measuring your carbon footprint along with actions you can take in a personal and business capacity to reduce this.

Webinar Attendees: 21 YouTube Views: 58 <u>Video Link</u>



VIRTUAL BAT WALK JUNE 2020

Limerick City and County Council in collaboration with the Vincent Wildlife Trust were delighted to launch Ireland's first virtual bat walk in Coillte's Curraghchase Forest Park on the Limerick EGLA YouTube Channel. This virtual bat walk is highly recommended as an educational tool for anyone learning about bats and how to use a bat detector. A shorter version of the video was produced for release on other social media.

YouTube Views: 1045 Full Video Link Short Video Link



Daubenton's Bat (Photo © Henry Schofield)

VIRTUAL TOUR OF THE CORBALLY ROAD MEADOW

Corbally Road Meadow is a 0.8 ha wildflower meadow in the heart of Limerick City. It is a haven for pollinators and other wildlife. Tours of the meadow had been planned to introduce school children and community groups to the wide array of plants and animals who live there. However, because this was not possible due to Covid, a short video was produced to bring people on a virtual tour of this wonderful place instead. The video has had over 1000 views to date. A shorter version of this video was produced for release on social media.

YouTube Views: 1080 <u>Full Video Link</u> <u>Short Video Link</u>



Uncut Verges on the Childers Road as part of the Let it Bee campaign

DON'T MOW, LET IT GROW

This webinar looked at an exciting project which focused on the management of road verges and amenity grasslands across the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area in Northern Ireland. It examined different ways of managing these areas to show how small changes in management give big benefits to biodiversity and ecosystem services. The presenter was Rachel Bain, Biodiversity Officer, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council.

Webinar Attendees: 92 YouTube Views: 495 <u>Video Link</u>

JULY EVERYDAY INVASIVES

In this webinar, Dr. Frances Giaquinto, ecologist and expert on invasive species, talked about some common garden plants which we are all familiar with, but which represent a real threat to our environment, particularly when they escape from our gardens. She also introduced viewers to the ground breaking work on the River Loobagh to tackle a particularly nasty invasive called giant hogweed, without the use of chemicals!

Webinar Attendees: 81 YouTube Views: 226 Video Link



Giant Hogweed on the Banks of the River Maigue in Limerick

WILD BEE WEBINAR?

Bee expert, Liz Gabbett, took viewers on a pictorial tour of one of Limerick City and County Council's pollinator friendly areas and pointed out the valuable flowers and bees that are likely to be encountered in these areas. She will also introduced the audience to What's that Buzz the on online e-learning tool, developed with support from Limerick's European Green Leaf programme.

Webinar Attendees: 37 YouTube Views: 115 Video Link

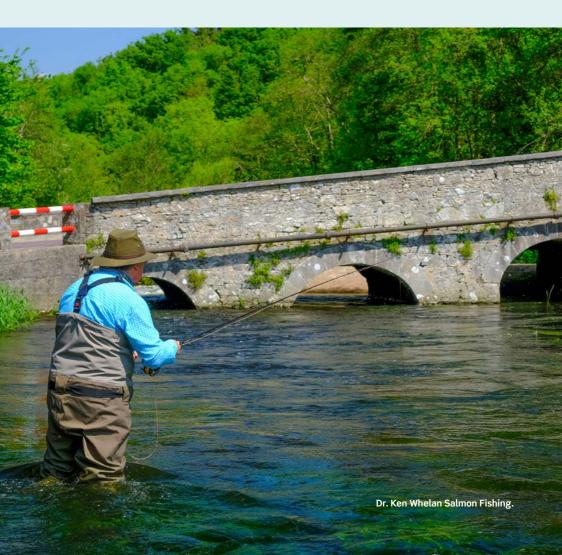


A White Tailed Bumblebee on a Thistle Flower

AUGUST

Our rivers are the life's blood of the countryside, teeming with life, both large and small. But our rivers are threatened by climate change, pollution and modern life in general. In this webinar, Dr. Ken Whelan (Atlantic Salmon Trust) introduced the audience to a magical world of underwater creatures, highlighted some of the threats they face and highlighted the steps all of us can take to keep our rivers healthy.

Webinar Attendees: 70 YouTube Views: 448 Video Link.



THE URBAN CO-OP

This webinar highlighted how Limerick's Urban Co-op champions traditional, culturally rich and nourishing, locally available food. The Urban Co-op embraces the principles of the circular economy and is a not for profit organisation. All profits are invested back into this successful social enterprise.

Webinar Attendees: 9 YouTube Views: 38 Video Link.



The Urban Co-op Promotes Locally Sourced and Sustainably Produced Foods

SEPTEMBER

LET'S GO BATS!

Dr. Kate McAney of the Vincent Wildlife Trust delivered a fascinating online presentation on Limerick's lesser horseshoe bats. Viewers found out about this endearing protected bat species and learnt why Limerick is so important to its survival in Ireland

Webinar Attendees: 47 YouTube Views: 121 Video Link.



Lesser Horseshoe Bat.

EUROPEAN MOBILITY WEEK/NATIONAL BIKE WEEK

While our planned car free family fun day had to be cancelled due to Covid 19, we nevertheless managed to celebarte National Bike Week with a fascinating exhibition on the history of the bicycle which was hosted in the city centre from the 21st to the 25th of September 2020.

This was a wonderful opportunity for people to learn about the history of one of our oldest modes of transport and get a glimpse at some of the bicycles of yester-year, such as an 1889 Penny Farthing. The exhibition traced the history of the bicycle from the initial concept sketch, produced by a student of Leonardo da Vinci in the mid 1400's to the present day and included information on the role of the bicycle in the two world wars and on Ireland's bicycle manufacturing history from the 1930's to the 1980's.



EGLA Team Member, Sharon Lynch, with a Penny Farthing – Part of the History of the Bike Exhibition

OCTOBER TREE DISEASES

Once again we were joined by Dr. Frances Giaquion, this time for a webinar on invasive tree diseases: why and how they are threatening our native trees, and the actions we can take to help prevent their arrival and spread.

Webinar Attendees: 68 YouTube Views: 104 Video Link.



Oak Processionary Moth is one of the many threats to native trees

UPCYCLING WORKSHOP WEBINAR

Ger from the Rediscovery Centre, (National Academy for the Circular Economy) challenged participants to channel their inner creativity to upcycle their 'stuff' with this excellent workshop style webinar. Potential upcyclers were treated to a host of tips to help with various types of projects.

Webinar Attendees:18 YouTube Views: 114 Video Link.



Ger from the Rediscovery Centre Demonstrating His Techniques

LOOKING FOR A QUIET LIFE?

A webinar event on the topic of Quiet Areas (entitled Looking for a Quiet Life?) was held on 12th October 2020 which was presented by Dr. Simon Jennings (Limerick City and County Council) and Dr. Antonella Radicchi (TU Berlin Institute for Urban and Regional Planning and developer of the Hush City App). The presentation discussed the harmful effects of environmental noise to humans, the benefits to health of Quiet Areas, their protection through formal designation and the design of future Quiet Areas, and the use of the Hush City App.

Webinar Attendees: 52 YouTube Views: 278 <u>Full Video Link</u> <u>Short Video Link</u>.



Westfields Wetlands

SLOW FASHION & CAPSULE WARDROBE



The Rediscovery Centre Promotes Circular Economy Concepts.

Arran Murphy, Rediscover Fashion's Programme Manager, showed participants how to become conscious consumers by giving tips on how to create a capsule wardrobe without limiting options for looking great! The webinar gave a fantastic insight into our fashion habits and how to empower changes that will help the environment, save you money and improve your wardrobe

Webinar Attendees: 41 YouTube Views: 68 <u>Video Link</u>

COMHAIRLE NA NÓG - (Limerick's Youth Council) What's So Hot About Climate Change virtual Workshop Oct 2020

Limerick City and County Council worked with EcoUnesco, a specialist provider of environmental education and youth services in Ireland and Limerick Youth Services to deliver this workshop to Limerick's Chomhairle na nÓg. The workshop challenged members to consider issues such as energy consumption, consumerism, globalisation along with biodiversity loss, sustainable development and energy generation. (This workshop was for Limerick's Youth Council members only and as such was not recorded).



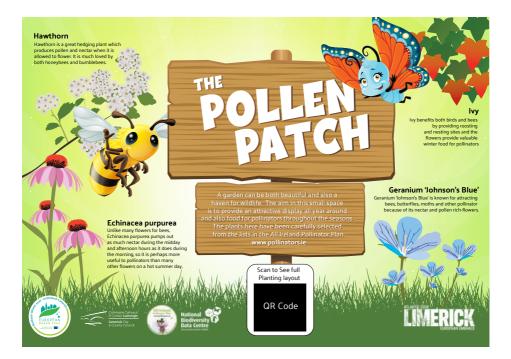
NOVEMBER

THE POLLEN PATCH

We had planned to create a pollinator friendly garden in Spring 2020 at the location of the European Green Leaf Plaque in Merchant's Quay. However due to Covid 19 restrictions, it was not possible to undertake the work at that time. The garden was finally planted in November 2020 and named "The Pollen Patch". It is hoped that this little garden will provide provide inspiration to other gardeners to dedicate an area of their gardens to pollinators. The planting scheme for the garden can be downloaded \underline{x}



Planting of the Pollen Patch in November 2020



LET'S TALK ABOUT CLIMATE

Given the popularity of the physical event in February, we decided to hold "Let's Talk About Climate"it again in an online setting. Once again Gavin Harte gave the audience an overview of the terminology and science involved in climate change. He also emphasised why all sectors of our community need to work together to help alleviate the causes and effects of climate change.

Webinar Attendees: 28 YouTube Views: 82 Video Link



GREEN PROCUREMENT WEBINAR NOV 2020

This half day webinar on Green Procurement was organised by Limerick City and County Council in association with the rediscovery Rediscovery Centre. Green procurement aims to stimulate the provision of more resource-efficient, less polluting goods, services and works. The event provided an exciting opportunity for all in the local authority and public sector to learn about green procurement and the circular economy, while also giving businesses an insight into what is required under the green procurement process, so that they can tender for public sector contracts.

Speakers were from a range of backgrounds including: Office of Public Procurement, The Rediscovery Centre, DL Architects, National Waste Collection Permits Office, Community Reuse Network Ireland along with Department of Environment Climate Action and Communications and the Local Government Operational Procurement Centre. One hundred and one people tuned into the live online event with another 248 subsequent viewers on the **Limerick EGLA YouTube Channel**

Webinar Attendees: 101 YouTube Views: 248 <u>Video Link</u>



DECEMBER

CONTACTLESS PUBLIC DRINKING WATER FILLING STATIONS

EGLA funding was used to partially fund new contactless, bottle filling stations, which allow citizens access to clean and safe water without the risk of touching high-use buttons that could increase the spread of infection. Users can simply place a water bottle into the holder and the sensors will pick up on movement and activate the machine. This helps reduce reliance on single use plastics and also made potable drinking water available to the public at no cost. The units have digital water flow meters. There are currently five locations:

- Merchant's Quay, Limerick beside the gate into St Mary's Cathedral
- Adare Library ,
- Civic Buildings and Courthouse complex in Kilmallock
- The Square, Abbeyfeale
- An additional site was added to the People's Park, Limerick in June 2021



Mayor Sarah Kiely with the Contactless Drinking Fountain in the People's Park

CHRISTMAS WINDOW TRAIL

Local theatre production company Lumen was engaged for Christmas 2020 on behalf of the European Green Leaf team. They were tasked with creating a bespoke window display at Silkes Arts and Crafts using recycled, upcycled and repurposed materials as part of the festive shop window trail, Walking in a Window Wonderland.

A digital guide produced to promote the window trail had 6,761 downloads, with 5,768 users viewing the event on Limerick.ie



Christmas Window Display Created with Recycled and Upcycled Materials (Can you spot the EGLA Logo?)

ECO FRIENDLY GIFT GUIDE

For Christmas in Limerick 2020, an Eco-Friendly Gift Guide was developed featuring gift ideas from local Limerick businesses and encouraging shoppers to have a greener, more sustainable Christmas, in recognition of the City's European Green Leaf status.



Some of the Items from Limerick's Eco Friendly Gift Guide

MARCH 2021

REIMAGINING IRISH RIVERS - WORKING WITH NATURE

A 2 day conference on river restoration had been planned for September 2020, however with Covid restrictions in place it was decided to defer this in the hope that a physical conference could be held in early 2021. When it became apparent that this would not be possible, the decision was made to hold the conference online.

Limerick's European Green Leaf Team organised this conference in partnership with Mary Immaculate College, The Maigue Rivers Trust, the Local Authority Water and Communities Office and The Rivers Trust (UK).

The conference was held on 22nd and 23rd March 2021. It featured speakers from across the UK and Ireland and covered a range of topics including rewilding rivers, citizen science, the roll of community groups and natural flood relief.

The success of this conference exceeded our wildest expectations: 1000 people registered to attend and there were 725 unique views on day one and 590 on day 2. . The conference attracted an international audience from a total of 13 countries comprising: Bahrain, Bulgaria, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, India, Ireland, Netherlands, New Zealand, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the USA. Videos of all conference sessions are available on Limerick European Green Leaf City You Tube channel

Webinar Attendees Day 1: 725 Webinar Attendees Day 2: 590 YouTube View : 388 YouTube Channel Link



OTHER EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

HUSH CITY APP

Cities can be noisy places. Research over the last decade has shown that prolonged exposure to high levels of environmental noise can have a significant adverse impact on our health. It can increase the risk of sleep disturbance, heart attack and stroke, amongst other ill effects. Access to Quiet Areas has a positive impact on our physical and mental health.

Throughout 2020 Limerick encouraged members of the public to use the Hush City app, which was developed by Dr. Antonella Radicchi of the Berlin Technical University. This app allows citizens to map places where they find peace and quiet in the city and to assess the quality of the soundscape in those area. The app can provide valuable information for city planning and also for residents and visitors to a city.

Awareness of the Hush City App was raised among the public through social media and local radio interviews. A short video was also developed on how to use the Hush City App and is available on the Limerick European Green Leaf City YouTube channel.

YouTube Views: 349 Video Link

There had been plans for Dr. Radicchi to visit Limerick in June 2020 to conduct a "soundwalk" and make a presentation to the public on the app and its uses. However, this had to be postponed due to COVID 19, but it is still planned to hold this event at a future date when restrictions are eased.





Hush City Logo

STREAMSCAPES AS GAEILGE (STREAMSCAPES IN IRISH)

The StreamScapes Project was Ireland's original environmental education programme. Since 1989 hundreds of schools and community groups in Communities throughout Ireland north and south have learned about their local Catchments through compelling classroom lessons and Field Trips to their local streams, rivers, lakes, and seashore StreamScapes produces imaginative publications and projects to increase awareness of the wealth of Biodiversity which inhabits healthy environments, and encourages action to assess, conserve, and enhance these species and habitats both locally and throughout Ireland.

Limerick's European Green Leaf Programme supported the publication of an Irish language version of the StreamScapes booklet. As a result, this booklet is now available to Gael Scoileanna (primary and secondary schools which teach through Irish).



Extract from the Irish Language version of Streamscapes

LIMERICK CITY EUROPEAN GREEN LEAF SWIFT NEST BOX PROJECT - MAY 2021

With the support of European Green Leaf Funding, Limerick City and County Council is leading one of the first multistakeholder conservation projects of its kind to save Swifts in Limerick. Swifts spend most of their lives in constant flight only ever landing to nest. The project aims to entice these high-flyers to stay briefly and breed in purpose build nest-boxes at five locations in Limerick City.

Swifts have declined by approximately 40% across Ireland in the last 10 years and have moved on to the RED List (highest level of conservation concern) in the recently released Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland 2020-2026 (4th edition). Once common in Limerick City, returning to nest each summer in small recesses in occupied and derelict buildings, the number of Swifts has dropped, mirroring national declines.

The new nest boxes have been installed at: The Hunt Museum; St. Mary's Cathedral; Limerick City and County Council Head Quarters; King John's Castle Exhibition Centre and St. Michael's Church on Barrington Street, with a total of 39 possible individual nests for the newly arrived birds to use. A special National Parks and Wildlife Service licenced lure has also been installed at each of the five sites. The lures emit the sound of the Swifts call attracting birds to the site. This increases the chances of attracting 'first time' nesters to the sites. The lure is on a timer and the volume is set to normal birdsong levels.

Stakeholders involved in the project are Bird Watch Ireland's Urban Bird Conservation Officer, Limerick City Parish (Church of Ireland, Limerick City), The Hunt Museum, Shannon Heritage, St. Mary's Parish Men's Shed, the Limerick Branch of Bird Watch Ireland and Limerick City Centre Tidy Towns.

Limerick Branch of Bird Watch Ireland volunteers and Limerick City and County Council staff are monitoring the nest boxes and although we cannot be sure that the nest boxes will be occupied this year, fingers crossed Swifts will occupy them in years to come.



Swift Boxes Ready for Installation on Council HQ in Merchant's Quay

ENGAGING SCHOOL CHILDREN WITH SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In order to encourage school children to engage with democratic processes and to highlight the importance of community involvement in decision making, Limerick City and County Council designed a specific primary and secondary school interactive workshop based around the proposed Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028.

The programme was designed to engage young people in the first stage of the plan consultation process which ran from 15th of August 2020 until 12th October 2020. Course material included A1 maps with specified radius around individual schools and a briefing document relating to the Plan. In total, 170 packages were distributed across all of Limerick's primary and secondary schools with additional resources included a virtual meeting with a Planning Official to discuss findings, ideas and their 'vision' for the future of Limerick.

The school consultation programme linked directly into the local community and planning and environmental issues in their neighbourhoods. The workshop included questions based around the local built environment, climate action, sustainable mobility, the circular economy and social development. The European Green Leaf City 2020 Award provided funding in support of this programme including the provision of prizes for a draw amongst participating schools.



Representatives from Our Lady's Abbey National School - winners of the prize draw for National Schools on the preparation of the Limerick Development Plan 2022 - 2028

IRELAND'S BUZZING INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POLLINATOR CONSERVATION

This conference had been planned for May 2020 and was to have been our flagship event Limerick European Green Leaf celebration year. The conference aimed to bring together a large audience to learn from international experts about successful pollinator initiatives around the world. Planning for the event had been completed with the venue booked, tickets issued, speakers engaged and flights arranged from as far afield as the USA. However, in March it became apparent that it would be necessary to defer the conference in light of the escalating Covid 19 pandemic.

It was originally deferred until May 2021, but in early 2021 it once again became apparent that a physical event would not be possible in the near future. At that point a decision was made to defer until March 2022, when there was reasonable confidence that a physical event might be possible.



SPREADING THE EGLA MESSAGE

REIMAGINING IRISH RIVERS - WORKING WITH NATURE

Throughout Limerick's celebration year, Limerick City and County Council's Marketing & Communications Department worked hard to spread the European Green Leaf message.

A dedicated Limerick European Green Leaf City website was developed on Limerick.ie to feature and promote ongoing initiatives, latest news and event listings. Throughout 2020 there were 3,364 unique site visits to Limerick.ie/European-Green-Leaf-City (Google Analytics). The following are the top 3 pages visited:

<u>Homepage</u> <u>Event Guide</u> <u>Event Guide - Hush City App</u> Individual events were promoted in the What's On section of Limerick.ie, on the dedicated EGLA website and on social media. There were **17** online events with a total of **3,690** page views. Following each live online event, videos were made available for viewing on our dedicated **European Green Leaf You Tube Channel**. There were **17** online events with a total of **3,690** page views, apart from the numbers who attended the events live.

Limerick European Green Leaf news, events and initiatives were promoted throughout the year on Limerick City and County Council's social media platforms Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.

#EGLA2020 and **#EGLALimerick2020** were the hashtags used to promote Limerick' European Green Leaf status throughout 2020.

FROM JANUARY 2020 TO JANUARY 2021:



Top locations of hashtag use were: Ireland, Canada, Belgium, United States, South Africa and Germany.

Hashtag sentiment score: 96.67

E-MARKETING

Limerick's year as European Green Leaf City 2020 was promoted through Limerick City and County Council's e-marketing activities. The launch

event, news and activities featured in e-newsletters including the Council Connect Staff E-Newsletter and the Limerick.ie Business Bulletin.



Limerick Business Bulletin

January 2020

ARTICLE

Limerick to be national exemplar in fight against climate change this year as it launches its programme for European Green Leaf Year 2020

Limerick's green credentials deepened as it launched its European Green Leaf Year with the announcement of a programme of events to mark the European Commission designation

Read more

PRESS RELEASES

To generate additional publicity and maintain momentum around Limerick City's European Green Leaf designation, Limerick City and County Council regularly issued press releases throughout the year.

A total of 31 press releases were issued to local and national media from

June 2019 to December 2020.

A member of the team was invited to speak about Limerick's designation as a European Green Leaf City at the VIP reception for the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge in March 2020.



EGLA Team Member Laura Ryan Speaking to the Duke of Cambridge about Limerick European Green Leaf Award

MEDIA COVERAGE

Audience Reach: 1,480,891 **PR Value:** €92,601.74

MEDIA FORMS			COVERAGE			PUBLISHED ARTICLES		
1	Articles	%		Articles	%	Sentiment	Number	%
Print	62	55%	Local	95	84%	Terbanda da constructiva da servada	12.0109.0007.0012.	
Digital	47	42%	Regional	10	9%	Positive	111	98%
Radio	4	4%	National	8	7%	Negative*	2	2%
Total	113	100%	Total	113	100%	Total	113	100%

Here is a Sample of some of the Media Headlines about Limerick' European Green Leaf Year:

Limerick named one of Europe's greenest cities by EU

Limerick to be national exemplar in fight against climate change this year as it launches its programme for European Green Leaf Year 2020

HEROES OF THE WEEK People keeping Limerick Green!

ROYAL VISIT: ROYAL COUPLE CHAT ABOUT CITY'S ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORTS

Royal couple 'interested' in Limerick discussion

Limerick to host Ireland's first virtual bat walk

New Limerick Roundabouts Sponsorship Scheme is all about biodiversity

Innovative contactless water bottle filling stations unveiled in Limerick

Let it Bee – wild flower meadows to be created around Limerick City



Using Hush City to identify quiet and tranquil areas in Limerick

Limerick webinar on Slow Fashion & Capsule Wardrobe

Once a European Green Leaf City always a Green Leaf City

Limerick City and County Council ramp up environmentally friendly initiatives

AFTERWORD

Much has changed since Limerick made its presentation at the final of the European Green Leaf competition in Oslo in 2019 and the move towards a greener and more sustainable future has gained pace.

In September 2020, The Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport issued for Strategy was public consultation. This plan prioritises sustainable transport and aims to minimise car dependency. It highlights the need to more closely align land use and transport planning so as to discourage the use of the private car, particularly for short trips, in order to fundamentally change how people move around the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area. This will require more efficient use of valuable street and road space and a prioritisation of walking, cycling and public transport.

In early 2021, Limerick City and County Council engaged consultants to develop a blue green infrastructure strategy for the city and environs. This will allow the more strategic management of our blue and green assets and ensure they are protected and enhanced. This will also provide the basis for an urban greening plan as required by the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030.

In April 2021, Limerick submitted its proposal for a decarbonisation zone in the city centre, incorporating the old Georgian Quarter. This area will become a demonstration area for interventions aimed at significantly reducing carbon emissions and provide an exemplar for other areas of the city and county.

The Limerick Laneways Project is aiming to revitalise 25 of Limerick historic laneways. A number of these laneways will be greened, thereby creating a green corridor through the city centre. Most significantly, Limerick Draft Development Plan 2022 to 2028 was recently issued for public consultation. This plan has the creation of a sustainable Limerick at its heart. The vision is that by 2030

"Limerick will become a green city region on the Shannon Estuary connected through people and places. This will be achieved through engagement, innovation and resilient urban development and self-sustaining rural communities. "

The key ambitions articulated in the plan are that

- Limerick will develop as an environmentally sustainable and carbon neutral economy - a pioneer in sustainable growth. This will be underpinned by the promotion of active mobility for all, creating an attractive and distinctive place to live, work and visit.
- Embracing the River Shannon, Limerick will provide room for people to enjoy the River Shannon/Estuary. The animation of the waterfront will increase public access and create new recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.
- The future development of Limerick will make it easier to live sustainably and be well prepared for the future, increasing opportunities for movement and connectivity between communities.

While our celebration year may have come to an end, we in Limerick look forward to continuing the transition to a greener future and to continuing to spread the European Green Leaf Message.



Limerick.ie/European-Green-Leaf-City