

Open Space Management in ▶ County Kildare

How will we continue to maintain
public spaces into the future?

Presentation by the Parks Department



How Maintained Currently?

By contractors

- Grass cutting - March to October - 2 cuts per month with pitches cut weekly
- Meadows - mown once or twice per year
- Weed Control - 3 applications per site on average with herbicide mainly Glyphosate based
- Plant Pruning - start/end of growing season
- Hedge Cutting - Annually or bi-annually
- Tree Works - Planting, Pruning, Removals
- All aspects require routine inspections, management and financial resources

Areas of Concern

Public opinion regarding:

- Pesticide/Herbicide usage - Glyphosate
- Pollinator Friendly
- Climate Change Mitigation/Adaption - Tipping Point
- Water Quality
- Tree coverage
- Quality of open spaces and facilities
- Greater need for public open spaces including pitches
- Community Resilience

Current Environmentally Friendly Maintenance Practices

- Meadows - hay crops e.g. Sallins Amenity Lands and Cherry Avenue, Kildare Town
- Grazing - of pasture lands e.g. Carton Avenue, Maynooth



Current Environmentally Friendly Practices cont.

- ▶ Reduced mowing - annual/bi-annual mowing for bio-diversity e.g. The Lakes, Naas and The Spa, Leixlip
- ▶ Spot spraying and hand weeding post initial clean up of beds with contractors co-operation e.g. Roundabouts = reduction of herbicide usage
- ▶ Working with Tidy Towns and Community Groups - creation of wildlife areas, meadows, pollinator friendly planting etc. e.g. Liffey Linear Park, Newbridge - Pollinator award under Green Flag Awards
- ▶ Strimming of weeds along boundaries and around obstacles with the co-operation of contractors



Other Potential Mitigation Measures?

► Potential Weed Control Measures

A weed is defined as 'the wrong plant in the wrong place.'

- Let the weeds grow (remove Noxious weeds)
- Hand weeding/grubbing out
- Reduced mowing/strimming

Alternatives to Pesticide (including Herbicides)

- Hot water and Hot Foam systems
- Burning by flame
- Pelargonic Acid (vinegar) on seedlings





Ivy: the saviour of honeybees

Right now ivy is in bloom. One doesn't have to see it to know that it is flowering, since the smell will be the tell-tale that it is nearby. It is one of the last flowering plants of the year, providing large quantities of pollen and nectar for bees. In recent years, possibly due to change in our climate, the honeybee has been able to take in sizable quantities of its nectar. This has a profound impact on stores within the hive during the winter months, ensuring the survival of the colony, should the beekeeper fail to properly feed it after the removal of the honey crop.

Although any bee will work ivy, *Colletes hederae*, the ivy bee, is dependent on the ivy plant for its supply of pollen. If ivy were to be culled from hedgerows the likelihood is that this

ivy is blooming all over the country at the moment, and the honey produced from the ivy bee has a distinct flavour. Willie O'Byrne writes

cheese. The honey has the same smell as the aroma coming from the blooms. The taste is strongly ivy but once the palate becomes used to it, one may look forward to using it. Interestingly last year I stopped eating the ling heather honey, instead, favouring the ivy. I suppose if the plant puts a good coat on cattle that eat it, I might get some benefit from the saponins in the honey.

From time to time articles appear denouncing the ivy plant and others praising it. Ivy growing with support from trees will produce flowers, as it gets older. Mature trees withstand it, providing support for its upward growth.

Once the plant is mature, it produces flowers in vast quantities, making travel time really economical for

Trial Examples to Date

- ▶ Dun Laoire Rathdown (DLR) have trialled Hot Water and Hot Foam systems. While Hot Foam was faster at killing the weeds it is labour intensive and slower than knapsack spraying (walking pace).
- ▶ Dublin City Council (DCC) have trialled Hot Water, Foam Steam, Flame Weeding and Concentrated Vinegar. Again eliminated weeds however degree of success with 1 application of herbicide = approx. 3 to 4 applications of alternatives.
- ▶ Environmentally sound?
- ▶ Appear to be uneconomical and labour intensive.
- ▶ Weeding by hand or by tools requires buy-in and input by the public.
- ▶ Tolerance of weeds and 'unkempt' areas needs to increase e.g. Food & Shelter for pollinators



Other Mitigation Measures cont.

- 1. Abrasive Sweeping
- 2. Electrocuting
- 3. Robots

Pros

- ▶ They work
- ▶ Innovative (2&3)

Cons

- ▶ H&S issues
- ▶ Labour Intensive (1&2)
- ▶ Expensive and research mainly in Monocrops (3)
- ▶ Vandalism/Theft (3)



Other Potential Measures

- ▶ Increase areas where reduced mowing is acceptable e.g. Road side verges, cutting at 6 weeks or greater intervals etc.
- ▶ Large areas: potential to leave unmown and cut pathways through meadows and wildflower areas. For example Castletown House and Gardens and Phoenix Park

Pros

- ▶ Aesthetically and Environmentally Friendly

Cons

- ▶ Grass cuttings must be collected = expensive and where to dispose off?



Other Potential Measures cont.



- ▶ Reduced scrub maintenance to increase biodiversity e.g. Carton Avenue, Maynooth - 3 year regime, Year 1 cut a side, year 2 cut other side and year 3 leave fallow. Commenced 2019 in conjunction with Maynooth Tidy Towns
- ▶ Zero Grazing to manage 'glut' of grass at start/end of season where viable (farmers input required)

Other Potential Measures cont.

- ▶ Grazing animals - cattle & sheep (Shropshire) to maintain areas
- ▶ Plant verges to reduce weeds (DLR - very expensive, need buy in from the public to reduce vandalism/desire lines through planting)



Other Potential Measures cont.

Educate

- Natural elements in playgrounds to associate nature with play and contentment



Other Potential Measures cont.

- ▶ Community Participation
- ▶ Bumble Bee monitoring

<https://pollinators.ie/record-pollinators/bumblebee-monitoring-scheme-2/>

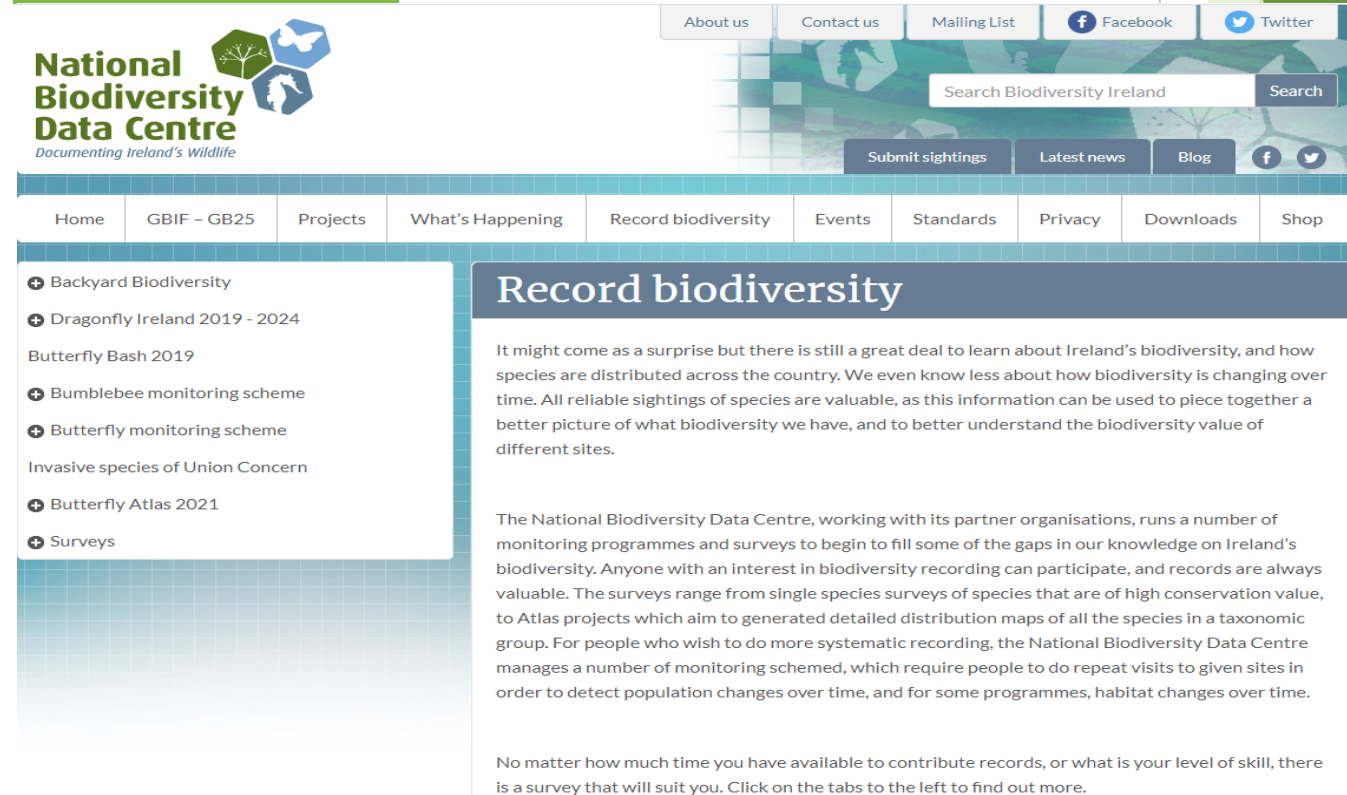
- ▶ Bio-diversity Recording
- ▶ Baseline data informs how we may manage an area



Action 23

Take part in the Bumblebee Monitoring Scheme

Identify interested people and set up at least one bumblebee monitoring scheme walk within your local community. In this scheme volunteers walk a fixed 1-2km route once a month between March and October and record the diversity and abundance of bumblebees that they see. The scheme is run by the National Biodiversity Data Centre who provide full support and training. The scheme is vital in tracking what is happening with wild pollinators in the landscape, and can be used to assess the effectiveness of any pollinator friendly actions that are being taken locally. If interested in taking part contact: info@biodiversityireland.ie



Other Potential Measures cont.

- ▶ Recording of biodiversity at catchment areas
www.catchments.ie
- ▶ Funding available to communities e.g. set up Rivers Trust or Agri-Environment team
- ▶ Bio Blitz Ireland www.Bioblitz.ie
- ▶ More public buy in more success in the long term



Other Potential Measures cont.

We would like to cordially invite you to
the launch of the:

Kildare Community Biodiversity Project

With special guest speakers Eanna Ní Lamhna,
Ricky Whelan and Juanita Browne.

Where: Newbridge Town Hall

When: 13th February 2020 @ 8pm

Please feel free to invite other interested
persons / groups from your community.
Light refreshments will be provided.

Please RSVP to: greenpineconsultants@gmail.com



The European
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Buy In is the Key

- ▶ Education
- ▶ All ages and all sectors of society - Over 65's want a 'bowling green' and under 30's want 'rewilding'!
- ▶ Policies and legislation to assist e.g. All Ireland Pollinator Plan, Climate Charter, Kildare County Council's Climate Change Adaption Strategy 2019-2024
- ▶ Beware of 'Fake News' items
- ▶ Research needed to give scientific based practical solutions



Plan for 2020 +

- ▶ Pilot trial areas within each Municipal District to educate and inform
- ▶ Where possible give 50:50 scenario - half maintained as before and half in more environmentally friendly fashion.
- ▶ Possible methods to be employed: reduced mowing regime - meadows, 6+ week cutting intervals, strimming instead of spraying, wildlife verges, managed 'wild' boundaries.
- ▶ Funding and procurement of scientific research to inform what practices in amenity horticulture are viable in the longer term.



Next Steps - 1. Potential Areas to be trialed by MD (in conjunction with contractors)

Green = Open Space
Gray = Grass Verge

MD	Site Ref	Existing Maintenance	Proposed Maintenance	Approx. % Area under Proposed Maintenance
Celbridge Leixlip	Crodaun Forest Park Entrance, Celbridge	16 cuts, 3 sprays	6 cuts, 3 x strim per annum	50%
	Maynooth Road, Leixlip	16 cuts, 3 sprays	6 cuts, 3 x strim per annum	50% (top & back of banks)
	Grass at Library, Captains Hill, Leixlip	16 cuts, 3 sprays	6 cuts, 3 x strim per annum	50%
	Celbridge Road (at Barnhall) , Leixlip	16 cuts, 3 sprays	6 cuts, 3 x strim per annum	15% (verges adjacent roundabout)
	Wonderful Barn, Leixlip	8 Cuts, 3 Sprays	6 cuts, 3 x strim per annum around the house & allotments, annual cutting of meadows.	100%
	Willowbrook, Celbridge	16 Cuts, 3 Sprays	6 cuts, 3 x strim per annum and annual cutting of meadows.	90%
Clane Maynooth	Pound Park , Maynooth	16 cuts, 3 sprays	6 cuts, 3 x strim per annum	50%
	Meadowbrook link road (Grass Area), Maynooth	16 cuts, 3 sprays	6 cuts, 3 x strim per annum	50% (site lines to be mown and narrow verges)
	Clane Ring Road, Clane	16 cuts, 3 sprays	6 cuts, 3 x strim per annum	40-50% Cut sight lines and ever second verge (16 cuts)
	Bawnogues, Kilcock	16 cuts, 3 sprays	6 cuts, 3 x strim per annum	80-90% excluding playing pitches
	Monread Park, Naas	16 cuts, 3 sprays	6 cuts, 3 x strim per annum, trial meadow 1 cut	40-50% excluding playing pitches
Naas	Famine Cemetery on Craddockstown Road, Naas	16 cuts, 3 sprays	6 cuts, 3 x strim per annum	50%
	Grass at M7 interchange at The Ball, Naas	16 cuts, 3 sprays, 1 Flail	6 cuts, 3 x strim per annum	50% exclude flail area
	Millennium Link Road (Newbridge Roundabout at LIDL to Irish Commercials) Naas	16 cuts, 3 sprays, 1 Flail inner and outer verge	6 cuts, 3 x strim per annum – outer verge. Flail inner verge x 2 per annum	100%
	New Road from Graveyard to Station Road, through Dunmurray Rise, Kildare	16 cuts, 3 sprays	6 cuts, 3 x strim per annum	40-50% Cut sight lines and ever second verge x 16
Kildare Newbridge	Hopkin's Haven Green Area, Monasterevin	16 cuts, 3 sprays	16 cuts outer verge and meadow in centre flail once	50%
	Moorefield Park, Newbridge	16 cuts, 3 sprays	6 cuts, 3 x strim per annum	50%
	Green Road, Newbridge	16 cuts, 3 sprays	6 cuts, 3 x strim per annum	50%
	People's Park, Athy	16 cuts, 3 sprays	6 cuts, 3 x strim per annum	50%
Athy	Woodstock Industrial Estate, Athy	16 cuts, 3 sprays	6 cuts, 3 x strim per annum	50%
	N78 Verges at Roundabout, Athy	16 cuts, 3 sprays	6 cuts, 3 x strim per annum	33%

Practical Pilot Example supported by LPT Funding

Grass from: Willowbrook



Grass To: Derry Beg Farm



Promotion of Alternative Practices

Communication Strategy

- ▶ Pollinators.ie - map the sites on the website
- ▶ Kildare County Council's Social Media
- ▶ Community Stories on Facebook - monthly updates (March to Oct/Nov)
- ▶ Signage - Pollinators.ie
- ▶ Public/Community Engagement - Social media comments, CRM, bio-blitz etc.
- ▶ Councillors - feed back and queries

Success Indicators

- ▶ Public Awareness - No. of hits on Community Stories monthly content
- ▶ Public Opinion- Surveys at the start and end of the maintenance period via PPN - targeted individuals/groups
- ▶ Cost Neutral

If Pilot is Successful... potential to expand the lessons learned across the county

Scientific research required into alternatives to manage areas successfully over time

2. Research - Alternatives Amenity Horticulture Maintenance Regimes to the use of Pesticides including Herbicides



Time is of the Essence

- ▶ Research Body undertaken

Actions Required

1. Scoping exercise required to identify:

- ▶ A. the areas where research may already have been undertaken with scientific based usable results identified and
- ▶ B. to identify the gaps in research.

resulting in a Scoping Report

- ▶ to inform research requirements and identify possible funding and research avenues.

2. Secure funding and award scientific research

To formulate effective, cost efficient, practical measures to maintain public areas in Environmentally Friendly fashion. Potential for 'spin-off' enterprises.

We are seeking funding of €50,000 for the initial scoping exercise to be undertaken. We may require your assistance at a later date to allocate matching or additional funding to raise the monies required.

- ▶ We all need to be Climate Champions

The background of the slide is a solid light green. On the right side, there are several overlapping, semi-transparent geometric shapes in various shades of green, including dark green, medium green, and light green. These shapes are primarily triangles and quadrilaterals, creating a modern, abstract design. A thin, dark green line also runs diagonally across the right side of the slide.

► Thank you