

2019-22

Kilmihil Biodiversity Plan



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Introduction

Kilmihil is a village of 445 inhabitants in West Clare. The economic activity is predominantly agricultural (dairy & beef) and this has strongly influenced land use.

The *Tidy Towns Committee* have developed and will be responsible for implementing the bulk of this biodiversity plan. This plan is in addition to the three-year plan created by the Tidy Towns Group in 2018 which focuses on the key areas of judging in the Tidy Towns competition.

Background to Kilmihil Landscape

- The area was renowned for its bogs but drainage, forestry and windfarm development have changed the landscape and habitats dramatically.
- The river which originally flowed through the village was culverted many years ago.
- There are 2 sports pitches (GAA & Soccer) and an athletics track (St Michael's School) within the village but these are not open to the general public except for specific events
- The main freely accessible public amenity area for the village is based 3km outside the village on a part of the shore of Knockalough Lake (Appendix 1)
- There are several small amenity areas around the village. Some are in private ownership but access is available.
- The construction of a public park on Main Street has commenced this year but this has some way to go before considerations on plantings can be made. The park is a separate charitable body *Kilmihil People's Park Ltd.*, whose main focus is on playground and sports pitch facilities
- There is a small *Tidy Towns Group* which manages some of the areas in the village but most of the work and maintenance is undertaken by the *Community Employment Scheme*.
- Both *St Michael's Community College* and *Kilmihil National School* in the village have Green Flag status and the pupils undertake a number of activities around biodiversity and ecology.

Goals

The Kilmihil Tidy Towns group is very small and as a consequence we have limited ourselves to three main goals to ensure that we achieve real improvements by focusing on 'do-able' projects that will encourage the Community to become more aware and involved.

Goal 1

Promote a greater awareness of local biodiversity and threats to it amongst the community of Kilmihil and its townlands

Goal 2

Improve the biodiversity of the area and engage the local community in biodiversity activities

Goal 3

Improve the pollinator and biodiversity value of managed plantings (flowerbeds, hanging baskets etc.)

Staying on Track

To ensure we achieve our goals and complete all the necessary activities.

- The plan will be distributed to all committee members and the Community Employment Scheme Supervisor
- Regular plan review meetings will be held
- Plans will be updated 6 monthly to reflect any necessary changes

Kilmihil Tidy Towns Biodiversity Plan 2019-2022

Key: ✕ = Action to be undertaken. ✓ = Task completed for year. → = Task commenced and ongoing

Goal: Promote a greater awareness of local biodiversity and threats to it amongst the community

Action/Activity	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	Led by
Committee to attend CLDC Biodiversity course	✓			CO,MD, JM
Annual Information Display with activities and free seeds/plants for Biodiversity Week	✓	✕	✕	JM
Bat Walk	✕	✕	✕	MD
Informative sign at Knockalough	→			AD
Managed for Wildlife signs in suitable areas	✓			MD
Promote & share on FB the activities of other Groups that are undertaking work in this area: WCWC, Clare Birdwatch, Clare Bat Group	✕	✕	✕	AD
Create a habitat map of the area for permanent display in Community Centre	→			JM
Heritage week activity? Dawn Chorus, Birdwatch at the Lake	✕	✕	✕	All
Biodiversity visit to managed 'wild' garden in Knockalough area in Spring 2020		✕		Jude Devine

Goal: Improve the native biodiversity of the area and engage the local community in biodiversity activities

Action/Activity	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	Led by
Identify locations & plant native trees. Consider removal & replacement of non-native. Key targets Sycamore and ornamental Cherry	✓	✕	✕	MD/JM
Leave a significant level of uncut verges	→	✕	✕	Work CCC
Distribute advice on managing verges for maximum biodiversity	✕	✕	✕	Work with CCC
Target the removal of invasive species	✕	✕	✕	CCC/AD
Maintain bat and bird boxes	→			MD, CES
Create insect / mammal overwintering spaces	→			MD, CES
Survey area for Swift presence & seek sites for swift boxes if applicable	→			Wildlife Officer
Distribute advice on native trees and cultivars suitable for gardens	✓	✕	✕	JM

Goal: Improve the pollinator value of managed plantings (flowerbeds, hanging baskets etc.)

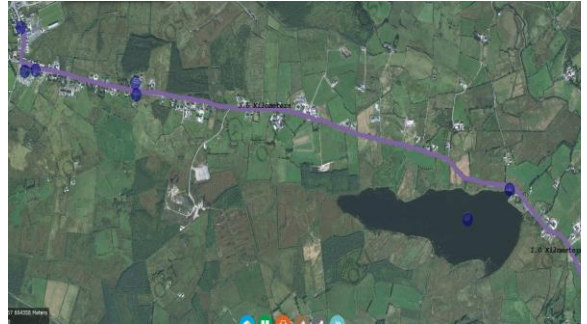
Action/Activity	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	Led by
Identify + map all TT/CES managed plantings	✕			JM
Audit current plantings. Do Soil tests.	✕		✕	JM/MD/CES
Plan plantings for following year	✕	✕	✕	All & CES
Action soil correction measures(lime/manure	✕	✕	✕	JM/CES
Plan a community orchard in Meadow,(Rreview with Kilmihil People's Park as potential alternative location may be available 2020)	→			MD/JM
Identify amenity areas managed by other groups and share biodiversity information with them	→			All

Appendix 1

Images of Amenity Features at Knockalough Lake



1. Hard landscaping leading from car interest



Knockalough from village. Blue dots=points of interest



2 Hard landscaping with rose bed and sculpture plinth



Sculpture now in place on plinth



3 Lake shore with grass and seating



4. Perennial planting and daisies at lake

Appendix 2

Key to Participants

AD - Angie Downes

MD – Mary Downes

JM – Jacqueline McGrath

CO – Carmel O’Flaherty

CES – Community Employment Scheme

CCC – Clare County Council

Appendix 3

Useful resources

Trees and tree planting

- http://www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/coclare/heritage/pdfs/buds_of_the_banner.pdf
- <http://www.clarecoco.ie/services/arts-recreation/heritage/county-clare-tree-design-guide-for-towns-and-villages-24243.pdf>

Native varieties of fruit trees- Irish Seed Savers Association

- www.irishseedsavers.ie

How to conduct a biodiversity audit

- <http://www.devon.gov.uk/devon-community-toolkit-for-the-natural-environment-feb-2012.pdf>

Habitat mapping

- http://www.greenschoolsireland.org/fileupload/biodiversity%20resources/Habitat_mapping.pdf
- http://www.northwessexdowns.org.uk/uploads/docs/publications/Communities_publications/Parish_Wildlife_Toolkit_WEBv2.pdf

Developing nature or heritage trails/ walking routes

- www.irishtrails.ie/National_Trails_Office/Publications/Trail_Development/Guide_to_Planning_and_Developing_Recreational_Trails_in_Ireland.pdf
- www.noticenature.ie/Walking_Trails_in_Ireland.html

Interpretive signage/ materials

- http://www.roscommoncoco.ie/en/Services/Heritage/Publications/Telling_People_About_Our_Heritage-Interpretation_and_Signage_Guidance.pdf

- http://www.heritagecouncil.ie/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/miscellaneous/Bored_of_Boards.pdf
- <http://www.americantrails.org/resources/wildlife/Interpretive-trail-signs-exhibits.html>

Building bird or bat boxes

- <http://www.birdwatchireland.ie/>
- www.batconservationireland.org/pubs/reports/Leaflet_3_batboxes.pdf

Planting to attract wildlife and pollinators

- <http://pollinators.ie/>
- www.butterflyconservation.ie/
- <https://www.rspb.org.uk/makeahomeforwildlife/wildlifegarden/>
- <http://www.ipcc.ie/advice/wildlife-gardening-tips/>

Creating a wildflower meadow

- <https://pollinators.ie/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/How-to-guide-Wildflower-Meadows-2018-WEB.pdf>

Invasive species

- <http://invasivespeciesireland.com/>
- <http://www.biodiversityireland.ie/projects/invasive-species/>
- <http://www.fisheriesireland.ie/Invasive-Species/invasive-species.html>

- **Protected sites, species and habitats**

- www.npws.ie