

Wild about Miltown Malbay Biodiversity Group:

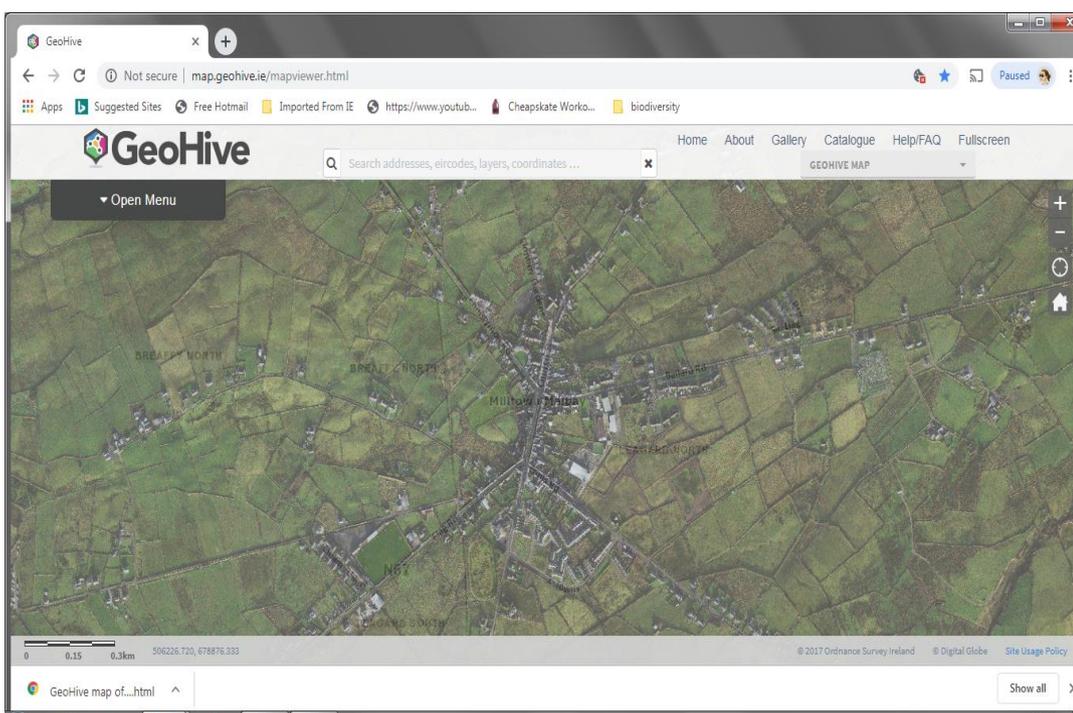
Initial Plan 2019- 2020



Introduction

The idea to start this project 'Wild About Miltown Malbay' came as a direct result of a biodiversity training course funded by Clare Local Development Company and delivered by Burrenbeo in the Resource Centre in Miltown Malbay earlier this year. Six of our members completed the training and a number of these members had also completed a 'Reading your Local Landscape' course in 2018. Both of these courses highlighted a need for a biodiversity group in our area, and so 'Wild about Miltown Malbay' was birthed.

The group aims to enhance biodiversity in the town, to raise awareness of the consequences of a lack of biodiversity, inform the community of ways to protect our many habitats and involve local participation in the process.



Aerial view of Miltown Malbay

Heritage and Nature in Miltown Malbay

Miltown Malbay is situated in the mid-west of Co. Clare and has a population of approximately 1000 people. It lies in an exposed location 2km from the coast with Spanish Point and the White Strand as the beaches closest to it.

According to the last census there are over 60 businesses which are open all year although many of the businesses in the centre of the town have closed in recent years.

Miltown Malbay came into being because of the development of Spanish Point as a seaside resort. It also had five corn mills and the remains of three are still visible in the landscape. There are many interesting archaeological sites, many dating back to pre-Christian times in the locality and in recent years an excellent heritage group have located and introduced them through lectures.

It was the granting of a charter to hold fairs which had consolidated Miltown's role as a market town. The Market House and Fairgreen were the focal point for the fairs, which reached their height of popularity in the last century and early part of this century before giving way to the marts in the 1950's.

Miltown also proudly claims one of the greatest uilleann pipers of this century in Willie Clancy. He died in 1973 but his life and work are commemorated through the festival named in his honour which attracts musicians from all over the world to Miltown each year.

The aerial map shows that the town is surrounded by agricultural land. The farms are family owned and mixed farming is the main type of farming in the area. Dry stone walling and large hedgerows are common features surrounding each of the fields, however the land is devoid of mature trees. Land is grazed or cut for silage, so there are few wildflower meadows, with the superb exception of the field by the White Strand.

Wild about Miltown Plan 2019- 2020

As we are a new group, our plan is focused on the establishment of the group, communicating with our community and liaising with other local groups (particularly Miltown Malbay Tidy Towns). We have an initial project in mind (item 4) and we sent out a questionnaire to the local community to seek other ideas. We hope to develop a more detailed plan once we are up and running.

1. We launched our group Wild About Miltown Malbay in the Resource centre in Miltown Malbay this summer May 2019 with the showing of the movie "Symphony of the soil" and we received a great response from the community with over 40 people attending on the night and many expressing an interest in becoming involved with the group.
2. We have set up a Wild About Miltown Malbay Facebook page and twitter account and hope to start a blog where we can inform the community about our projects and activities as well as answer any queries they may have about biodiversity.
3. Contact was made with the Chairperson of St Joseph's GAA club in Miltown Malbay and permission was given to begin rewilding a raised bed and the boundary wall of the car park. Work on this project will begin on September 2nd.
4. Contact was made with Limerick Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB) regarding the field in front of the Spraoi Creche facility on the Ballard Road, Miltown Malbay. We have since been given the go ahead to begin and shall be meeting with the board in mid-September to arrange final details.
5. We are currently working on the group's constitution and vision statement, registering with revenue, putting together a business plan and completing a number of funding applications.
6. We had a meeting with Fran Giaquinto on 20th August to seek advice on planting of the GAA car park as well as advice on the Japanese Knotweed problem we have around the town.
7. The first of our Public Information Meetings is scheduled to be held in the newly refurbished community centre on Sept 25th. We will have a guest speaker on the night. We intend to run monthly meetings and have speakers cover different aspects of biodiversity.
8. We have compiled a survey which was sent out to the community and other interested parties. We hope this survey will help us identify other project sites within the town and areas of interest and concern for the community. A number of possible project sites have already been identified i.e. the church car park and E town green spaces.

Support and resources for implementing the Plan

We have been given great support from the Miltown Malbay Tidy Towns Group, Clare County Council, Burrenbeo and CLDC. As well as having been offered voluntary support from a number of locals including some of the Asylum Seekers currently resident in the Central Hotel, Miltown Malbay. We aim to develop more links with our community and local groups.

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/Paris_h_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

Potential Funding Sources

Leader Funding

Lush - UK Charity Pot

LA21 Funding

Community Foundation Funding.

Spreading the word

See our blog wildaboutmiltownmalbay.blogspot.com

Find us on Twitter @wild_miltown

If you don't have a twitter account, search with the twitter search bar for @wild_miltown to see our tweets.

Or find us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/693701671064329/>