

Our Community Climate Action Award 2018



Award Sponsored by: Supervalu Tidy Towns & the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment

Ballon Village, County Carlow
acting local, thinking global

GO GREEN Expo: *acting local, thinking global*

Village: Ballon, Co. Carlow

This year Ballon Tidy Towns established a village GO GREEN expo to raise awareness amongst ourselves about the issues surrounding climate change. We wanted to engage in some meaningful way with a topic that often seems beyond us. We are told that it is important for billions of people around the world but surrounded by abundance and relative prosperity we feel it's a difficult concept to grasp materially. We are likely contributing towards the problem but will face little of the consequences. So, in an effort to learn more, to dig deeper, and to hopefully positively impact on environmental outcomes we have started a village GO GREEN day. Here follows the story.

Picture # 1: Our GO GREEN traffic wardens with Máire George & Bernie Mullins.



GO GREEN Expo Village Diary

The **GO GREEN Expo** was held at Ballon School on Friday the 11th May 2018. Weather was very inclement but the contingency plan worked a dream. The pure excitement of all had to be contained as the first event of the day progressed.

1. A '**Junk Kouture**' fashion extravaganza showcasing the creativity of the children and their parents by using only items normally confined to the bins. Teacher Una Murphy was production manager with school Caretaker Paul Cummins as stage and sound Engineer.
2. The **grow your own vegetables campaign** swung into action in the Agenda 21 Polytunnel facilitated by our neighbour Tom Cox from Fenagh Tidy Town Group. The junior Tidy Town Group, Green School Committee, and School Gardening Groups used the relay method to **plant window boxes for flower displays** in the village this summer. Leader here was Tom Rodgers of Cheetah Electronics aided by transition year students Joe O Neill and Seamus Connolly.
3. Back to the main arena again and Tom Malone of local Malone Fruit Farm took to the platform. With huge interaction and audience participation **Tom showed how to use up surplus fruit and vegetables by making your own chutney**. This is another idea to save on food waste and is very easy one. Buying local and eating local fruit and vegetables was promoted during the workshops.
4. The indoor **ECO BBQ** was warmly welcomed. There was not one pick of waste food left by three pm. **All the food was locally sourced**. Kathleen and Sinead Abbey members of Ballon Tidy Town Group were the main helpers aided by Trish Moran our Siopa Glas Tus worker and the teachers.
5. Next item on the programme was the **Carlow Voice Ireland Ambassador Dee Sewell who explained and showed us what goes into your recycling bin**. Great insight from this workshop and many questions answered. **A survey of a sample of homes around Ballon is next on our list to do and will form part of a national survey**. Dee also happens to be National Chairperson of Community Gardens of Ireland – a great contact to have!
6. To finish out the day Tom Duffy led a fantastic drumming workshop. We were all left wanting more from this ancient tribal music form & eco-friendly too 😊

GO GREEN Expo Village Diary

Picture # 2: Getting Ready to Rumble!



This great early Community Summer Festival was pure inspirational and our message was broadcast live by our local radio KCLR. Edwina Grace of KCLR **launched our two new actions** for Going Green in our Community.

- A. **Village Water refill station** – no more needless buying of bottled water! “Refill your own water container or bottle and stop wasting money on inferior water in plastic bottles.” A water outlet was put in place outside Siopa Glas Community Recycling Store on the Main Street in Ballon for public use. See www.refill.ie for further information on this action for the future.
- B. Commitment to making available for sale ‘**Ecoffee**’ cups. These re-usable cups can be used instead of takeaway cups.

In support of our GO GREEN day we got great media coverage by the Carlow Nationalist, our local parish newsletter, and our village website www.ballonvillage.com. The main news on KCLR gave a

quote from Chairperson of Ballon Tidy Towns, Máire George on our Go Green Expo and on the new Refill water point.

The event was supported by Carlow County Council, Fáilte Ireland, Nolan's Texaco, McAsseys Heritage Butchers, Marina Barry, Bernie Mullins Secretary of Ballon Improvement Group and Assistant Principle of Ballon National School. Mr Heffernan Headmaster. All the pupils, teachers and other school workers. Eileen Murphy of Ballon Improvement Group. Mr Tom Cox Fenagh Tidy Town Group. Tom Rodgers of Cheetah Electronics, the transition year students Joe and Seamus. Siopa Glas volunteers especially Breda Wray and Marion Doyle. Kathleen Abbey, Sinead Abbey from the Tidy Towns Group. Local Photographer, Michael Martin, KCLR with Edwina Grace. Chris Fingleton, the Nationalist. Michael Dawson, Ballon Community Notes for the Nationalist.

For more records of our GO GREEN expo day go to:

Village Website: <http://www.ballonvillage.com/ballon-improvement-group-2018/>

KCLR news on our water refill point:

<https://kclr96fm.com/carlow-community-taking-a-big-step-to-reduce-its-plastic-waste/>

Ballon National School Blog on GO GREEN expo:

<https://ballonns.scoilnet.ie/blog/2018/05/11/eco-festival-day-in-ballon-ns/>



GO GREEN Expo & Climate Action

Working Together to Change Together

Our GO GREEN expo was aimed at everyone and anyone. We roped in the primary school, our neighbour's in Fenagh Tidy Towns, local business, local radio and everyone from the area that attended. The event was really focused on starting conversations between friends, neighbours, families and colleagues and breaking down the barriers between the scale of the problem and what can be done in a household, business, and village level. Every action counts, good and bad – it is our choice to make the changes where we can and no-one has all the answers.

Did you know?

We told everyone about this day! Apart from being a very well attended event we went out live on local radio thanks to KCLR. We used our social media accounts and contacts to spread the word that climate action is needed and it that it starts right here right now with simple actions.

Small Changes are Meaningful – Start today!

We have feedback from the children that they were so excited about the day, they really got on board with the theme and the ethos behind the day. It has opened up conversations about what goes in what bin and how we can reduce how much we throw away. The drumming workshop seems to have really strengthened the connection between working together and climate action.

We followed on the day with four key actions:

- A. The Refill water point. “Refill your own water container or bottle and stop wasting money on inferior water in plastic bottles.”
- B. E-coffee cups that we distributed for sale across local businesses. Millions of throwaway cups are dumped on in our landfill system every year and far too many end up on our roadways.
- C. Distribution of easy to use recycling check list that can be put on the fridge.
- D. Commitment to work with VOICE Ireland to carry out a survey on household recycling habits.

Skip the Skip

Our Junk Kouture event kicked off the day. The primary school children embraced this challenge and reveled in the spotlight with their creations. Junk Couture encourages kids to look at what they are throwing in the bin and challenges them to re-imagine how ‘rubbish’ can be re-interpreted and

GO GREEN Expo & Climate Action

re-used or indeed not used. It also requires them to create a narrative around their outfit, stories are the best way for a message to travel.

Being nestled in the Carlow countryside we are very aware of how lucky we are to have such great food suppliers nearby. Obviously, we incorporated this into the day. The BBQ used local food suppliers and went down very well.

Join Us!

The Green Expo day is straightforward to replicate – low cost and easy to organize. We see great scope for developing the day – creating events aimed at a greater range of age groups and bringing in a cross section of our community. Having hundreds of these events across the country could generate loads of new ideas for simple solutions on how we can meaningfully tackle climate change at a local level.

THE WASTE STOPS HERE

ecoffee cup
Is the reusable
Cup you will
want to use
over and over
again—and do
your bit to help
#stopthe100billion
waste



AVAILABLE FROM : THE FORGE RESTAURANT, KILBRIDE,
THE WALLED GARDEN, ALTAMONT, CAFÉ DE MODE, BALLON

www.ballonvillage.com. Facebook.

Contact: 087-2424934

GO GREEN Village Initiatives

Ballon Village has been initiating green themed projects for years both in response to and independently from Tidy Towns supported projects. The following provides an overview of our commitment to ecologically based solutions.

1. Slí and Dúlra walkway was established in 2017 with native trees and an accompanying booklet. The signage is being developed with the help of the village renewal scheme.
2. Biodiversity study was carried out in 2015 and was published with support from the Heritage Council.
3. Two community orchards were planted with apple pear and plum in 2016.
4. An Ogham stone stands at the entrance to the Slí. The stones were reclaimed from an old bridge that was being reconstructed and are inscribed with the ancient tree alphabet.
5. Ballon village is part of the National Pollinator Plan.
6. A number of annual events are held along the theme of ecological awareness: Dawn chorus events with Eanna Ni Lamha; Cycling events during Bicycle Week; Community apple juicing day in September; annual Heritage Week Events such as the Hedge School; Plant and Seed swap days.
7. Our community school garden that was set up in 2011. A polytunnel was put in place in our Community Garden which was funded under Agenda 21 Scheme.
8. Community Photography competition on Nature Themes.
9. Our very successful 'Siopa Glas' - a community recycling shop that was set up in 2012.
Managed by volunteers and opens five days per week
 - a. Winner EPA's Waste Minimisation Award in 2012.
 - b. Winner County Carlow Best New Green Business 2012
 - c. Winner 'Can-IT' Award Supervalu Tidy Towns 2010
10. Worked with the county council to establish and extend new footpaths around the village.
We are especially proud of walkways that create connected routes.
11. Maintained a topical village website since mid-nineties

12. Our **GO GREEN Expo!**

13. Go Green Booklet - **Balana Glas, Greening Ballon** is presently being produced.

Page 3 of Slí an Dúlra Booklet

Join us in our small community demonstrating sustainable living, nature based education, recycle building, nature walk and environmental conservation an experience in utter tranquillity in nature far away from the hustle and bustle of modern life. A visit to Slí an Dúlra is both educational and regenerative with a strong emphasis on nature and a 'slowing down into the moment'

(This short walk incorporates a Native Tree Walk established in 2015)

This project came about as a result of our biodiversity study - Dúlra Bhalana and our Native Tree Walk. Workshops were held within the community and the result was the establishment this short nature walk within our village.



Main aim of the establishment of this walk is to promote biodiversity, sustainability, health, wellbeing, place to meet and chat. Provide an urban green space in our village and promotion of sit and reflect areas.

1. Old School Heritage Building
2. Recycled Fun Picnic Area
3. Native Planted Walkway Garden
4. Old Graveyard with area left for bees and butterflies
5. The Fun Garden on the Hill
6. Community Orchard Ballon Hill
7. St. Bridget's Replica Well
8. Fairy Tree & Fairy Doors
9. 1916 Garden
10. Pier Park - three pocket gardens

Contact

Contact:

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Thank You for reviewing our application!



**Uisce Saor ag Siopa Glas Balana,
Co. Ceatharlach**



See map on www.refill.ie for country wide refill stops